

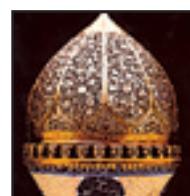
On the 110th anniversary of the birth of Mao Zedong, Mao's daughter Li Na tells of her childhood with her father.

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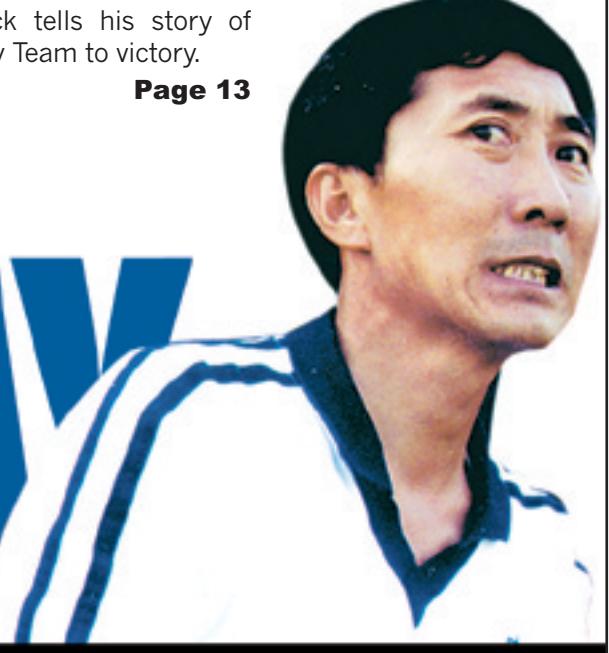
A brand new book on the priceless collection of Ming & Yuan Dynasty Chinese porcelain in Turkey.

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"Devil Coach" Kim Chang Back tells his story of leading the Chinese Field Hockey Team to victory.

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Olympic Venue Construction Kicks Off

Let the games begin: Beijing breaks ground on the Olympic venue construction project

Construction of the National Stadium and the National Swimming center, two of the main venues for the 2008 Olympic Games, broke ground on Wednesday, launching a three-year building project for the games.

With an investment of 3 billion yuan (about 360 million US dollars), the National Stadium, known as "bird's nest" because of its giant lattice-work structure of irregularly angled metal girders, will be the centerpiece of the 2008 Games.

The 80,000-seat National Stadium, located in the south of the Olympic Green, will host the opening and closing ceremonies as well as track-and-field events during the 2008 Olympics.

The National Swimming Center, one of the landmark architectures on the Olympic Green, encloses floor space of 70,000 square meters. With 17,000 seats (6,000 permanent and 11,000 temporary); this center will host swimming, diving, water polo and synchronized swimming events during the 2008 Games.

Along with the National Stadium and the Swimming Center, other venues in the first group to be built include the Beijing Shooting Range and the Laoshan Velodrome.

Bids for other Olympic projects, including the Olympic park on the northern edge of the city, are also under way. Beijing has promised to finish construction of all sporting facilities for the 2008 Games at least a year ahead of time, so test events can be held in 2007.

(Xinhua)



Workers begin construction on Olympic venues this week.

Photo by Cheng Tieiang

American Sues Chinese Company: Case Closed

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Last month, Jennifer Clare Fradenburgh sued her employer Sichuan J&L Consulting Company for breach of contract. The case was heard at Chengdu Wuhou Court on Monday this week to reach an out-of-court settlement, with both sides claiming satisfaction with the outcome.

Fradenburgh, a 25-year-old teacher from Boston, signed a one-year contract with J&L. The contract stipulated that she would start teaching middle school on September 1, 2002, as arranged by the company. She would receive 3,700 yuan remuneration plus 600 yuan for housing and an additional 8,000 yuan for airfare upon completion of her contract.

Unfortunately, Fradenburgh fell ill from May 14 to 20. Unable to work, she asked J&L for sick leave. By May 21, she was ready to go back to work but found that another teacher had taken her place. She ended up working from June 4 to 13, with no further work arranged for her by J&L Company.

Fradenburgh then petitioned the Chengdu Arbitration Committee citing that J&L had violated the terms of their contract. She asked the Committee to void their contract as of June 18 (as she could not take on oth-

er work while the contract was still in effect).

Although supporting Fradenburgh's demands, the committee issued the decision too late - on September 29, one month after the date of contract expiry. The committee ruled that not only should the contract be terminated on June 18, but J&L must pay Fradenburgh a fine of 400 US dollars, airfare home and wages from May 14 to June 13 (as the contract stipulated sick pay for 15 days).

The late ruling seems to be the reason why Fradenburgh choose to issue the additional lawsuit against J&L Company.

Diao Hong, Fradenburgh's attorney from Ying Ji Law Firm, represented her at no cost. Hong said that a retroactive decision was unfair in certain respects since her client was unable to find work due to the contract limitations and thus had no income. "Who will make up for Ms. Fradenburgh's loss of income from July to September?" asked Hong.

Liu Jing, the arbitrator who dealt with the case, said that everything was done according to arbitration rules. After accepting Ms. Fradenburgh's application, when they found the company in breach of contract, the arbitration committee rescinded the contract.



Jennifer Fradenburgh outside the courthouse.

er contract in November 2002 - claiming operational needs. This was the contract saved as the original. "Although the second contract didn't contain any radical changes, it was still dangerous for my client to sign another contract," said Diao Hong. "I don't know why J&L asked Ms. Fradenburgh to sign another one," added Hong.

According to the "rules for the administration of employment of foreigners in China", employers must apply for employment permission for foreigners and may do so only after obtaining approval in the form of The People's Republic of China Employment License for Foreigners. J&L did not obtain this License for Fradenburgh.

Three days before Christmas, Fradenburgh and J&L Company finally reached an out-of-court settlement. Lawyer Hong reports that both sides are satisfied with outcome but declined to detail the nature of the settlement as per her client's request. Fradenburgh says that she would like to continue working in China but would like to work outside the teaching profession.

Despite its happy ending, the case between Ms. Fradenburgh and J&L Company highlights the many issues involved when employing foreigners. Hong said it was not her first labor dis-

pute case between foreigners and Chinese companies, with most issues centering on contract disagreements. "Many foreigners did not choose their employers carefully and lacked correct information about contract signing. They must ensure that their potential employers have the proper certification to hire foreigners and retain one original contract," Hong advised.

An official from the office for administration of employment of foreigners under the Ministry of Labor and Social Security said that he was sure Ms. Fradenburgh's case was not the first labor dispute, though the office didn't have an official tally of total foreign employee and Chinese company labor disputes.

The official further urges foreigners intending to work in China to refer to the "rules for the administration of employment of foreigners in China" before they enter into a contractual agreement with any company to protect their rights while abiding by the law.

He also emphasized that Chinese companies must also communicate better with their foreign employees to avoid labor disputes due to cultural or language misunderstandings.

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State Council Adopts Measures to Ease Power Shortage

By Zhang Bo

In response to the 2002 nation-wide power shortage and the worsening situation this year (related report on page seven), the State Council recently met to report research findings and to announce the enactment of six measures aimed to ease the bottle-neck of power supply in the long term.

According to Xinhua Net, these measures include: strengthen management and distribution of electricity supply, accelerate power plant and grid construction, standardize and harmonize pricing

mechanism for power consumption, facilitate linkage to coal supply, electricity production, power transmission and strengthen management of power consumption. Together, the measures seek to meet people's daily needs first while ensuring safe and stable power grid operation.

A report from Guangzhou-based *Nanfang Daily* on December 4 shows that the State Council approved 13 construction projects for power stations petitioned by the National Development & Reform Commission last year. The combined

projects total an install capacity of 11.88 million kilowatts with a total investment of 51.2 billion yuan.

This is the first time in China's electric industry construction history that so many projects are being undertaken at one time.

Meanwhile, the operation of the first generating group of the Three Gorges Project has already significantly contributed to eliminating power shortages. During peak-hours of electricity consumption, 40% of its incremental power supply was transported to east China which most

badly needed the supply.

The State Electricity Regulatory Commission and local governments have also put forward some emergency measures to strengthen power demand management to rationalize power consumption.

These measures include: adopting a flexible price system for peak and low power consumption periods to even out power grid usage, adjusting unreasonable power prices, continuing some favorable policies and improving the utilization rate and reliability of existing power generation units.

Per Capita GDP Tops US\$1,000

China is expected to register a per capita gross domestic product (GDP) of over 1,000 US dollars this year, according to the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS).

Manufacturing was the dominant force driving industrial growth, characterized by the soaring auto and mobile phone consumption of this year.

Hi-tech industries contributed a further 23.7 percent to industrial growth. Statistics also show that both real estate and private investment greatly boosted economic growth.

Economists forecast that China's GDP will exceed 11 trillion yuan (1.33 trillion US dollars) in 2003, a year-on-year increase of 8.5 percent. (Xinhua)



Shoppers in Shanghai do their bit to raise China's per capita GDP to over US\$1,000 for the first time. Photo by Photocome

China Bans US Beef & Cattle Imports

On Thursday, China imposed a ban on the import of cattle and related products from the United States as a temporary measure against the possible spread of mad cow disease to the country.

Milk, milk products, hide and photographic gelatin are not included in the list of goods to be embargoed, according to an urgent circular jointly issued by the Ministry of Agriculture and State Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine.

The circular was issued to the subordinate departments of the ministry and administration throughout the country, following the report of a suspected case of mad cow disease in the State of Washington, in the northwest of the United States, earlier this week.

The circular urges stricter border inspection and animal quarantine to departments at all levels, according to related laws and regulations, to prevent the spread of mad cow disease into China.

It also requests animal quarantine departments to take immediate measures to intensify monitoring of cattle (including embryos) imported from the United States in recent years as well as their offspring (including crossbred calves).

These departments are required to immediately report any discovery of abnormal cases to the ministry and administration. The sample of any suspected case must be sent to designated laboratories of the ministry or administration for confirmation.

(Xinhua)

New Year Sees First Economy Investigation

By Zhang Ran

The State Council announced the launch of China's first general national economic survey in the new year.

According to the State Council, the new economic survey focusses on manufacturing (second industry) and services (third industry).

The survey will include legal representatives from both industry units and private businesses across the two industries.

The general economic investigation will be launched twice each decade. The general agriculture survey (first industry) remains

on its original schedule (once every ten years) due to the long survey period.

This national survey aims to generate an all-around picture of the scale, structure and proficiency of the second and third industries. A basic units directory (coding) and database of all the trades will be established as a result of the survey.

A special team for this first general economic survey has already been established to facilitate inter-branch coordination, the broad-ranging enquiry and the technical demands of results presentation.

China Tightens Fixed Asset Investments

China will tighten control over investment in fixed assets, especially blind investment in certain industries, according to the State Council after an executive meeting held Wednesday.

The Chinese government will tighten market entry while lengthening approval time for: projects, land use and loans for certain industries which have grown irrationally following over-investment.

Official estimates for 2003 showed

annual growth of investment in fixed assets at 23 percent, accounting for 60 to 70 percent of gross domestic product (GDP) growth.

Tang Ming, chief economist of the Asian Development Bank (ADB) Resident Mission in Beijing, said the real growth rate of capital investment in the first three quarters of the year was higher than that during the overheated period of 1993-94. (Xinhua)

Unqualified Development Areas to Weed Out

By Zhang Ran

Officials from the Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) announced that a review of development areas has started, with the intention to weed out unqualified ones.

While some areas saw rapid economic growth after being identified as a development area, others have seen improper land utilization. "Certain local governments ignored their practical situation,

appropriated peasants' lands, and even left designated areas untended," said Zhang Xinbao, director of the Bureau of Legal Supervision of MLS.

Zhang added that development area ratification rights are owned by the State Council and provincial government. Among the 5,500 issued, a large number are illegally established. This review will redress that situation and remove both illegal and unqualified areas.

Public Security Review

Reported crimes investigated by Beijing Police rose slightly by 6%, compared to last week. Break-ins and car thefts again accounted for most of the cases.

Unenclosed residential complexes and unguarded houses in eastern Chaoyang, Haidian and Shijingshan were the most common districts for break-ins while car thefts occurred mostly in Xicheng, Haidian and Fengtai districts in the early morning hours. Basic-model Santanas, minibuses and motorcycles accounted for the majority of stolen vehicles. Police have urged citizens not to leave cash and valuables in their vehicles.

Chaoyang, Haidian and Fengtai are also the most common districts for robberies. Most robberies were committed around schools, bus stops, beneath overpasses and on the walkways between residential complexes.

With the New Year's Day and Spring Festival coming up, police are focusing on the illegal sale of fireworks and firecrackers. Police have also launched a special inspection on agricultural product markets and scenic spots in Beijing.

(Information from Beijing Public Security Bureau)

Bank of Japan Opens Beijing Branch

By Ji Runju

Bank of Japan, Japan's central bank, established a representative office in Beijing on Tuesday. This is the bank's seventh oversea representative office. At the same time, this marks the first time the central bank of a Group-7 member has opened an office in China.

The Beijing office will be responsible primarily for: information collection, face to face communication with Chinese central bank and other officials, technical support (including currency policy, bank supervising and market operation).

With increasing strengthening of financial systems in China, Japan clearly recognizes the benefits of working more closely with China.

A financial expert in Beijing noted that while opening a representative office did not equal launching an actual business, nonetheless the rep office will prepare the groundwork for other Japanese institutions to begin doing business in China.

Four Illegal Land-use Cases Investigated

By Zhang Bo

After completing investigations of five cases of land misuse in mid November, the Ministry of Land and Resources (MLR) said on December 21 that public investigations targeting an additional four illegal land-use cases has begun.

The four cases are: illegal land occupancy of Danzhuang highway project in Liaoning Province, illegal approval of managerial land transfer at lower prices by local governments in Fujian Province, Shenyang University Zone in Liaoning Province and Nanjing Iron and Steel Group without prior government permission as required by law.

An official from the Law Enforcement and Supervision Bureau under the MLR said the

four cases came to light during a nationwide crackdown on illegal land transfer. Led by five departments of the central government earlier this year, the results of investigation and sentences received ample publicity.

An official from China Land Resources also said that investigations of the five major cases involved illegal land use in Tianjin Municipality, Shanxi, Jiangxi and Shandong provinces respectively. Results of the investigation are expected to be made public soon.

According to Tuesday's *Beijing Star Daily*, a total of 168,000 cases involving illegal land use have been handled so far this year, twice as much as the same period last year, said the official.

Fuel Cell Bus Focus of Public Bidding

By Ji Runju

On the afternoon of December 18, China invited global public bidding for the purchase of six fuel cell buses. The move aims to help popularize the new technology, a unique energy transformation system. According to *Beijing Youth Daily's* report, the 6 buses in this first project will be used in Beijing and Shanghai as a demonstration.

China's project to commercialize fuel cell buses began formally on March 27, 2003. China government, the Global Environmental Fund (GEF) and the United

Nations Development Program (UNDP) worked together to raise an investment of 32.36 million yuan from the Department of Science and Technology along with the municipal governments of Beijing and Shanghai.

The project calls for 12 fuel cell buses to be on the road in those two cities within the next five years, with an estimated total mileage of 1.6 million kilometers during that time.

As the flagship "green automobile", the fuel cell bus will serve the Beijing Olympic Games in 2008.

Second Generation ID Card Arrives for the New Year

By Zhang Ran

puter read and visual read. The new ID card is expected to resolve issues of identical or incorrect ID numbers. With a color photo, the new ID card also delivers a much clearer image for more accurate visual ID.

The total nation-wide second generation ID card implementation will be launched at the end of 2004, to be completed by 2008.

Passage to Singapore Made Easier

By Zhang Ran

Procedures for mainland Chinese passport holders to visit Singapore have now been simplified, according to the Singapore government.

Issued on January 1, 2004, the new visa policy issued by Singapore no longer requires applying visitors to go to the Singaporean embassy in person nor to pay a deposit of 5000 yuan.

Starting in the new year, visitors wishing to go to Singapore will only need to bring their passport and deposit certificate to the travel agent.

At the same time, the permitted number of days of stay in Singapore has been extended from 14 to 30 days.

Tourists with diplomatic passports and official passports are exempt from requiring a Singaporean visa.

Beijing Hyundai Leading Local Auto Industry

By Zhao Hongyi

Beijing Hyundai, the joint venture auto manufacturer of Beijing Automobile Industrial Holding Co. and Hyundai Automobile, launched its second model, the Elantra sedan, in China on Tuesday. That day also marked the one-year anniversary of the launch of the carmaker's first product, the Sonata sedan, two months after the company's establishment on October 16, 2002.

By the end of November, sales of Sonatas surpassed 50,000. "We'll launch a new

model each year and reach our annual production volume to 300,000 vehicles by 2005," promised Xu Heyi, chairman of the joint venture, at Wednesday's launching ceremony. The car producer is currently focusing on the construction of the second phase of its plant in northern Shunyi District. Building of the factory's third phase and a second plant will start next year.

Xu promised Beijing Hyundai would reach an annual production volume of 600,000 units by 2008, when all construction

should be completed.

The company's explosive growth has propelled the development of Beijing's automotive industry and market.

After three years in the red, the local auto industry finally starting turning profits this year, according to An Qingheng, chairman of Beijing Automobile Industrial Holding Co., the government supervisory body for the city's auto industry. Total vehicle production in Beijing in the first three quarters of this year reached 245,000 units,

49,900 of which were passenger cars.

Of the four local automakers, light truck producer Beijing Foton posted a sales volume of 11.9 billion yuan by the end of October and Beijing Jeep, the joint venture between Beijing Automobile Industry Corp. and DaimlerChrysler, achieved a production value of 3.2 billion yuan in the same period. Though Beijing Automobile Industry Co., which produces BJ2020 series SUVs under its own name, has not released

official figures, the company is also expected to have been in the black.

Nearly 300,000 automobiles were sold in the capital market, generating a sales volume of 30 billion yuan, in the first 10 months of this year.

This September, DaimlerChrysler reached an agreement with Beijing Automobile Industry to assemble Mercedes-Benz sedans and trucks, which An said would further promote the quality and image of the local auto industry and its products.



Beijing Hyundai launched its second product, the Elantra sedan, on Tuesday.

First Sino-Brazilian Regional Jet Passes Trials

By James Liu

The first Sino-Brazilian ERJ145 regional jet aircraft passed a 10-minute flight trial on December 16 in Harbin, capital of Northeast China's Heilongjiang Province.

The 50-seat turbofan aircraft was assembled by Harbin-based Embraer Aircraft Industry Co., a joint venture established this January by China's Hafei Aviation Industry Co. and Empresa Brasileira de Aeronautica S.A. (Embraer) of Brazil, the world's fourth largest aircraft manufacturer. The Brazilian company entered the China market in 2000.

The newly assembled ERJ145 jet is equipped with a Rolls Royce engine and has a flight range of 2,600 kilometers, according to Cui Xuewen, president of the joint venture and of Harbin-based Hafei Group. At the press conference held for the plane's first flight, Cui added the joint venture was capable of producing up to 24 aircraft annually and would produce eight jets in 2004.

The ERJ series is a new generation of turbofan regional jets first put on the market by Embraer in 1996. They have taken the lion's share of the global regional aviation market with 700 aircraft already delivered to end users.

Market surveys conducted by Chinese airlines show regional aircraft, meaning those with less than 100 seats, have strong market prospects as more air routes are opening between domestic cities. At present, regional aircraft only make up 12 percent of all aircraft used in China, 18 percent below the international average.

Some industry experts have estimated that in the next 20 years, domestic demand for regional aircraft will exceed 2,000 and international market demand will surpass 7,000 planes.

International collaboration in the design and manufacturing of commercial aircraft would help China's aviation industry adapt to new market demands, said Zhang Yanzhong, general manager of China Aviation Industry Corporation II (AVIC II), at Tuesday's ceremony for the roll-out of the new jet.

AVIC II is a state-owned enterprise responsible for the research and development of transport, general, training and military aircraft and helicopters. It owns 81 enterprises, including the Hafei Group, and has registered capital of 53 billion yuan.

Electrolux Stakes Spot in Appliances Market

By James Liu

Fortune Global 500 company Electrolux held a product launch ceremony for its 2004 light household appliances in Beijing this Monday. It is the first time the company has introduced light appliances on the domestic market since the establishment of the China branch of Electrolux Floor Care and Light Appliances China on December 22. More than 200 distributors from across the country participated in the meeting at the Grand Hyatt Hotel.

Fang Ce, national marketing director for Electrolux,

said indoor cleaning products such as vacuum and air cleaners and small kitchen appliances like coffee machines, toasters, cookers and ovens. Electrolux invented the vacuum cleaner and at the show displayed its impressive new Trilobite robotic vacuum that can navigate around obstacles as it automatically cleans the floor. The smart device can also remember aural orders and charge itself as needed. Such advanced cleaning technology comes at a price – in this case 30,000 yuan, according to one distributor from Hubei Province.

"Price is the first and deciding factor in selecting an Electrolux product. A price tag of 30,000 yuan for a vacuum cleaner is definitely more than I expected," the middle-aged distributor, who refused to reveal her name, told *Beijing Today*.

Fang disagreed, saying Electrolux products are the Rolls-Royces of the vacuum world. He continued that the company was working on a plan for attracting distributors and customers to its products. For one thing, Electrolux will help distributors set up uniform retail counters and provide sales and management training.

The high-tech products shown at the event includ-



The robotic Trilobite is the flag ship of Electrolux's new vacuum cleaner line.

Besides that, Electrolux will fully utilize its nationwide network of 400 post-sale service centers to provide solutions for the Chinese consumers," said Fang.

Product manager Shao Qiwei said in his speech that Electrolux products could meet the demands of different Chinese consumers, as "the prices of the products fall in seven levels and thus are affordable to many consumers."

The distributor from Hubei noted, "Electrolux's reputation is likely to draw

consumers. But the fact that the products are on average priced 20 percent above competitors could be a problem."

Last year, the domestic light home appliances industry grew an impressive 30 percent, according to figures from the State Statistics Bureau. "We hope this vibrant growth will give Electrolux a chance to enter the mainland market and that over the long term, only quality products will survive market competition," Fang concluded.

Air China Breaks Tradition of November Blues

By James Liu

Yesterday, Air China announced it earned profits of 300 million yuan last month, a reversal of the airline's history of posting losses of millions of yuan every November. The strong performance has allowed Air China to balance its budget and post profits of 170 million yuan for the first 11 months of the year, and should pave the way to annual profits despite the heavy losses sustained this spring as a result of the outbreak of SARS.

"Our company used to have losses in November. This is the first time we have earned profits in this traditional low season," Air China spokesman Wang Yongsheng said Thursday to *Beijing Business Today*, "We carried 26.3 percent more

passengers in November from the same period last year and sales rose 22 percent from last year."

However, a local security analyst surnamed Zhu said that the better-than-usual performance was mainly a product of tax and administration fee cuts by the central government intended to help Chinese airlines quickly recover from the impact of SARS.

The airline, which operates the most international flights of all carriers on the Chinese mainland, has posted profits for two consecutive years since 2001 and is planning to hold its initial public offering in the Hong Kong stock exchange around the middle of next year.



Wang Xianzhang, China Life chairman, gives the thumbs up at the company's New York IPO last Wednesday.

China Life Lures Overseas Investors with IPO

By James Liu

Shares of China Life Insurance Co. jumped 25 percent at the company's initial public offering (IPO) on the Hong Kong stock exchange on December 18, slightly less the first-day gains of the company's New York IPO the day before, when the investors raised US\$3 billion.

In Hong Kong, dozens of bank branches opened two hours early on Thursday to give small investors extra time to apply for shares ahead of the noon cut-off. The five percent of IPO shares earmarked for small investors was 130-times over-subscribed as of last Thursday evening Hong Kong time.

The listing was sponsored by China International Capital Corp., Citigroup, Credit Suisse First Boston and Deutsche Bank.

Huarong Shucks 22.2 Billion Yuan of Bad Assets

By Zhao Hongyi

Huarong Asset Management Co. announced on Monday in Beijing that it had sold 22.22 billion yuan of bad assets to six investment management companies.

The six purchasers are Citi Group, JP Morgan, Goldman Sachs, UBS Warburg, Morgan Stanley, and Aoyier Investment Management, the only domestic buyer.

The purchased assets were sold in 17 packages covering 1,048 state owned enterprises. Three of the 17 packages were purchased in their entirety, while only promises of purchases were made for the rest, meaning the handling of the assets must be conducted in cooperation with Huarong.

Search Engine Huicong's Parent Listed in HK

By James Liu

Huicong International, parent company of the Chinese Internet search engine Huicong, issued 100 million shares for its initial public offering on the Hong Kong stock exchange's growth enterprise market last Wednesday. The shares opened at HK\$1.09 each, and with a secondary addition of 1.5 million shares, the company raised HK\$120 million from the IPO.

Huicong provides search services to domestic portals Sina, Sohu, Netease, and Tom.com. The company claims its search tool covers 200 million Chinese-language web pages.

This year, the domestic search engine market was worth between 400 million yuan and 600 million yuan, and that figure should grow to 2 billion yuan over the next three years.

Green Buildings Face Rosy Future

By James Liu

The Sino-US Seminar on Green Buildings, sponsored by the Ministry of Construction and US-based companies Carrier and Otis, was held Tuesday in Beijing. Experts and officials from both countries discussed systems for rating green, or environmentally-friendly, buildings and the development of the green construction industry.

Green buildings, which feature high energy and water efficiency, environmentally-friendly materials, waste water treatment facilities and high standards of indoor air quality, are a rising trend in the domestic real estate industry. To date, six Chinese buildings have applied to the US for Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) trademarks as green buildings.

At the seminar, Jiang Yi, a professor at Tsinghua University's School of Architecture introduced the assessment system for green buildings for the Beijing Olympics, which is generally regarded as the country's first green building standard.

Tom.com Bets on Online Gaming

By Shan Jinliang

Tom.com president Wang Leilei launched the company's first online shooting game, Karma Online, on Tuesday at the Loft bar in Beijing.

The online game is part of Tom.com's overall push to diversify its scope of business and overtake China's top three portal websites, Netease.com, Sohu.com and Sina.com. At the launch ceremony, Wang said his company was pursuing listing on the Nasdaq and Hong Kong stock markets.

The game launch also comes in the wake of the smashing success of Counter Strike, a shooting game that has attracted around 10 million players nationwide.

Parmalat Founder Flees Italy

Milan, December 24 (Reuters) - Italian food giant Parmalat, currently embroiled in one of Europe's biggest corporate scandals, filed for bankruptcy protection on Wednesday as prosecutors discovered the group's founder had left the country.

Parmalat's troubles, which could involve more than 10 billion euros (\$12.4 billion) of missing money, have been compared to Enron's collapse.

The firm requested protection from creditors under a fast-track decree rushed into effect by the government less than 24 hours earlier to clean up the crisis at Italy's eighth biggest industrial group.

The government has appointed veteran rescue expert Enrico Bondi to produce a recovery plan. Bondi was named Parmalat's new CEO 10 days ago as the

scandal was unfolding.

But investigators looking into suspected fraud hit a snag when they sought to interrogate Parmalat's founder and former CEO, Calisto Tanzi, only to find he had left Italy for an undisclosed foreign country.

A judicial source said Tanzi, 65, one of 20 people under investigation, was willing to return to face questions.

"Calisto Tanzi is outside Italy and will return soon," the source told Reuters after speaking to Tanzi's lawyer, who said his client was resting.

Tanzi opened his first milk plant in 1961 and built it into one of Italy's best-known multinationals, employing 35,000 people in 30 countries.

The scandal has also put a spotlight

on Parmalat's partners, including some of the world's biggest banks and auditing firms.

(Svetlana Kovalyova and Emilio Parodi)

Analysts' Take:

The Italian government will continue its efforts to save Parmalat, even though it is facing the binding rules of the EU that prevent a government from getting too deeply involved in corporate business. Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi said the efforts were intended to "preserve the industrial part of Parmalat which is part of the country's wealth, and to restore the country's confidence and reputation."

In the smaller economies in Europe, such as Italy, world famous brands are pillars of the economy. Governments will

always help when these corporations are in crisis. Last year, when General Motors tried to acquire Fiat, the Italian government intervened to protect the brand from disappearing.

— Luo Hongbo, director, Center for Italian Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences

Parmalat has a 65 percent stake in the dairy joint venture with Nanjing Dairy Group established in July 2001 in Jiangsu Province. But the JV had losses of 15 million yuan in 2002. Parmalat withdrew its Italian employees from the JV this year.

Before that, Parmalat had built a number of dairy product processing plants in Tianjin and Heilongjiang.

— Nanjing Daily, December 24

Japan, Korea Halt US Beef Imports

Tokyo/Seoul, December 24 (Reuters) - Japan and South Korea, the two top buyers of US beef, suspended imports Wednesday after the United States reported its first case of the deadly mad cow disease, triggering fears humans could become infected.

Alarm over the brain-wasting disease, bovine spongiform encephalopathy or BSE, which wreaked havoc in Europe in the 1990s, drove down share prices of fast-food companies and raised consumer concerns about food safety.



Reuters Photo

McDonald's Rushes to Reassure Customers

New York, December 24 (AFP) - McDonald's raced to distance itself from the mad cow case in the US.

"This situation has absolutely no connection whatsoever to McDonald's or our suppliers," said McDonald's spokeswoman Lisa Howard.

The hamburger group took a pounding in Europe and in Japan in previous years when mad cow disease scared away millions of consumers.

Nasdaq Denies Seeking NYSE Merger

New York, December 23 (Reuters) - Nasdaq on Tuesday denied a Wall Street Journal report that it approached the New York Stock Exchange for a possible merger three weeks ago.

"It's not true," Nasdaq CEO Robert Greifeld said in an appearance on CNBC. "It's an interesting story, but there's no basis in fact."

"It was based on information from people in a position to know," WSJ said in a statement.

Vivendi Agrees \$50 Million Penalty

New York, December 24 (AP) - French media giant Vivendi Universal agreed to pay a \$50 million penalty and former CEO Jean-Marie Messier will forfeit a \$25 million severance package to settle fraud charges brought by the US regulators.

The settlement was announced Tuesday by the Securities and Exchange Commission after an 18-month probe into the Paris-based Vivendi, whose US holdings include the Universal movie studio, Def Jam Records and the USA cable network.

SEC accuses Vivendi, Messier and former company finance chief Guillaume Hannezo of deceptive accounting practices so the company could meet earnings estimates.

(Erin McClam)

Russia's Gold Reserve Increased

Moscow, December 23 (Pravda) - Russia's gold reserve reached \$70.6 billion by the end of November, said Russia's central bank director Sergey Ignatiev.

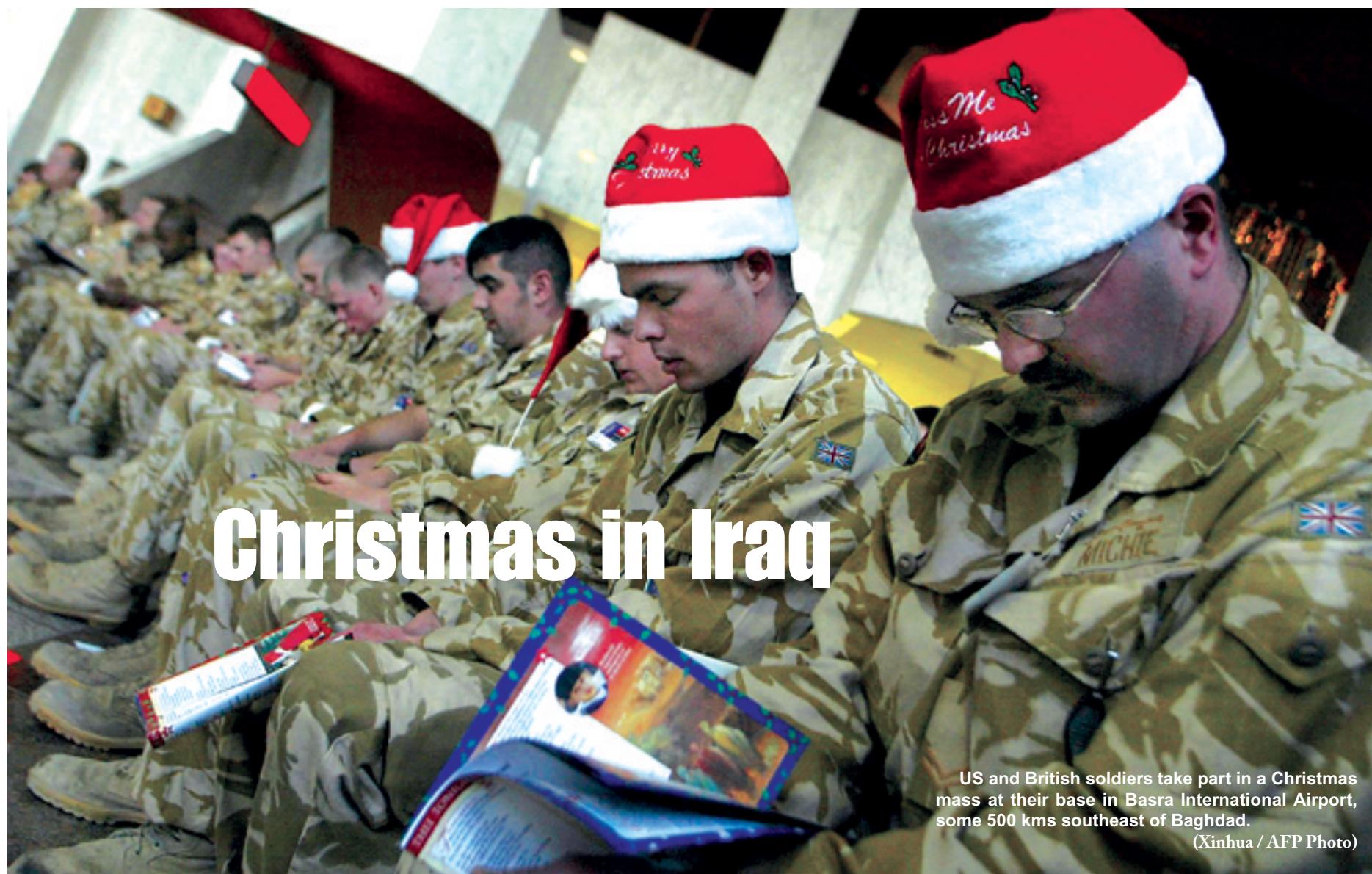
"The amount is enough to support our total imports in one year," said Mr. Ignatiev in Moscow.

Investor money is still flowing into Russia. This indicates that the "strategic capital withdraw" from Russia in the past decade has come to an end.

India's Forex Reserves Touch \$100 Billion

New Delhi, December 20 (AFP) - India's foreign exchange reserves have reached \$100 billion, the country's central bank said.

Officials from the central bank attributed the rising reserves to strong foreign institutional investment in India and a rise of the rupee against the dollar.



Christmas in Iraq

US and British soldiers take part in a Christmas mass at their base in Basra International Airport, some 500 kms southeast of Baghdad.

(Xinhua / AFP Photo)

New Fight For Asian Skies

Singapore, December 10 (Reuters) - Singapore Airlines (SIA) announced it will set up an Asian budget airline called Tiger Airways in a four-party venture that will begin flying from the city-state next year.

SIA said in a statement that its partners will be Ryanair founder Tony Ryan's Irelandia Investments, the Singapore government's investment arm, Temasek Holdings, and US private investors Indigo Partners.

SIA's defensive decision could cannibalize its own market and sets the stage for a bloody fight with budget rivals, analysts said on Wednesday.

"The trick for these operators will be to see who will be the last man standing," said Christopher Gee, a strategist at JP Morgan and Chase. "Tiger Airways has four shareholders who are very deep pocketed and they have more access to capital than any other operator out there," he added.

Tiger would be the second start up in the city state, competing head on with ValuAir, set up by former staff of Singapore Airlines. Upstart Malaysian discount airline Air Asia is also pushing for business among Singapore's four million people.

"The move was expected. But their choice of partners shows they are going out there to make some money from this venture," Mr Gee said. "I think the market is going to give them the benefit of the doubt in this," he added.

Singapore Airlines will hold 49 per cent of Tiger Airways.

Analysts' Take:



A number of safety problems need to be solved before starting budget airlines and late night "red-eye flights".

The first is pilot exhaustion, which could lead to mishandling and greater risks.

Aircraft fatigue is another issue. Overuse of aircrafts will lead to an increase in maintenance costs as well.

Thirdly, the market has not grown fast enough in China as we do not have enough routes, flights or airplanes to maintain budget airlines. This is a cost-effective issue.

As management skills and market conditions improve, budget airlines will come to life sooner or later. But safety is always the first and most important issue we have to consider in the air transportation business.

— Zhang Linli, director, Air Transportation Management Office, CAAC

Japan and Russia to Discuss Pipeline

Tokyo, December 16 (Reuters) - Japan and Russia agreed that a Japanese plan for an oil pipeline from Eastern Siberia to Russia's Pacific coast was a good idea, but stopped short of making any commitment at this stage.

Japanese Trade Minister Shoichi Nakagawa told Russian prime minister Mikhail Kasyanov that Tokyo was ready to provide financial assistance to Russia to build the pipeline routed to the Pacific.

But while import-dependent Japan has been trying to persuade Russia to build a pipeline from Eastern Siberia to nearby Nakhodka on Russia's Pacific coast, Russia has steered clear of making any commitment.

"The project must benefit both Japan and Russia. I would like to emphasize the importance of the pipeline for Japan," a Japanese official quoted Koizumi as telling Kasyanov.

Japan's hopes for the Nakhodka pipeline, that would cost an estimated \$4 to 5 billion, took a knock this year when Russia and China signed a declaration that they would strengthen cooperation in the oil and gas sectors, including construction of a huge Russia-China oil pipeline.

Analysts and Russian government officials have

said Russia does not have enough reserves to justify building pipelines to serve both and more exploration was needed.

The Chinese plan calls for a 600,000 barrel per day (bpd) pipeline to Daqing in northern China. The proposed Japanese pipeline is designed to ship up to one million bpd by 2007-2009.

(Teruaki Ueno)

Analysts' Take:

Russia first came up with the initiative to sell oil from Siberia to China in 1994. The two prime ministers agreed on a feasibility study for the \$2.8 billion Angarsk to Daqing oil pipeline at the end of 2001. The two presidents Putin and President Jiang Zemin confirmed again at the end of 2002.

Since Japanese prime minister Koizumi visited Moscow in January this year, Japan has accelerated its negotiations for an oil pipeline from Russia.

In a new move, Russia said in the environmental feasibility study that an Angarsk-Daqing line "could cause environmental damage." Russia suggested to provide oil to China by railway carriages.

— Yang Li, senior researcher, Chinese Institute of International Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Viacom, Comcast Join Up

New York, December 19 (Reuters) - Viacom and Comcast said they signed a multi-year deal for the cable operator to carry Viacom's television networks and cable channels.

The pact includes permission for Comcast to broadcast Viacom's CBS affiliates in local markets, as well as Viacom's national cable networks like MTV, Nickelodeon, Spike TV, Comedy Central and BET. It also provides for joint development of new video-on-demand services featuring shows from CBS News and MTV Networks.

The wide-ranging agreement is effective immediately, the companies said, and includes extensions of existing carriage deals, as well as renewals of expiring contracts.

Analysts were unsure what kind of impact the deal would have on Viacom and Comcast's operations, because the rates being paid for programming were not disclosed.

Cable operators are looking to hold down programming costs through tough negotiations with cable and broadcast networks.

Viacom's MTV Global is the first channel licensed to land directly on the Chinese mainland. The music program is now available in Guangdong Province. Before that, foreign channels were only available in hotels and had to cooperate with local media players to broadcast their programs, such as the China Entertainment (CETV) of Rupert Murdoch's News Corp.

Viacom has been applying to launch its kids-focused Nickelodeon channel in China since September this year.

Viacom China's CEO Li Yifei said she expects a \$1 billion business turnaround in the next ten years in China. Being a program production and broadcasting company, Viacom believes purchase of local media players is the best way to achieve that goal.

— 21st Century Business Herald, December 14

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Auctions Pawn Off Heavy Polluting Cars

By James Liu

The capital's first auction of government-owned cars not up to municipal emissions standards was held on Sunday.

The first batch of 70 cars up for sale, including Santana and Audi sedans, SUVs and trucks, were quickly sold for a total price of 2.6 million yuan. Similar auctions will be held on December 28 and January 11 at the Beijing Used Vehicle Fair, which recently moved to a new location near the southwest corner of the Fourth Ring Road in Fengtai District. By the end of the three events, the planners hope to auction off over 400 domestically-made and imported vehicles.

On Sunday, an online auction was also conducted at the website www.2sc.com.cn so bidders from other regions of China could also enter the competition for the Beijing govern-



Bidding was heated for the used government cars on auction at the Beijing Used Vehicle Fair on Sunday.

Xinhua Photo

ment autos. The website offered detailed pictures and information on each car confirmed by auction professionals.

The aim of the auctions is to improve air quality and reduce gasoline use in the capital

in keeping with orders issued in July by the Beijing Bureau of Environmental Protection that forbid automobiles that do not meet Euro I emissions standards from driving on Chang'an Avenue and streets within the Sec-

ond Ring Road from 8 am to 7 pm. Implementation of those orders began last month.

Cars found not up to snuff have yellow certificates pasted to their windshields, earning them the popular new moniker of "yellow label cars." The municipal government has vowed to sell more than 5,000 such emission-troubled cars owned by local administrative departments in the next three years.

Euro I standards stipulate that hydrocarbon discharges should not exceed 1.13 grams per kilometer for a gasoline-powered vehicle and carbon monoxide emissions should not exceed 3.16 grams per kilometer.

The auction attracted 133 local individuals, 28 Beijing-based used car dealers and online bidders from 14 other provinces and municipalities.

"I plan to buy a Santana car from among the auctioned cars

because the price is low and the vehicle is in good condition," said Xiao Zhanqing, a 40-year-old man from Kushui County, Hebei Province. He pointed out that one of the Santanas up for sale, a 1993 model, was priced at just 18,000 yuan at the auction, while its actual value should be closer to 30,000 yuan.

According to figures from the Beijing Bureau of Statistics, the number of used Beijing cars bought by people from regions outside the capital in September and October were 20.5 and 17.2 times the numbers from the same months of last year, a direct result of the city's implementation of stricter environmental policies.

Beijing authorities hope to improve the environment for the 2008 Olympics and plans call for introducing Euro III vehicle emissions standards by 2005.

Groups Address Needs of Migrant Ayis

By Chen Ying

A conference on the training and rights of migrant workers in the local family service industry was held at the Beijing Qilu Hotel in Xicheng District on Tuesday.

Wu Jing, chairman of the Beijing Migrant Girls Culture Development Center said the conference was mainly focused on how to help women migrant workers in the industry. "Rural women are more likely than men to take jobs as housekeepers. Unfortunately, their human rights are all but completely ignored once they get to this city," she said. Wu added that these women are in urgent need of help and support.

The Beijing Migrant Girls Culture Development Center is a non-governmental organization founded in January 1993. As the sponsor of the conference, the center invited state and municipal officials, a representative from the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), researchers from the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences and employees of other domestic and international NGOs to participate. "I'm really glad that some women migrant workers also came. Their living condition can improve with care from authorities, academics and NGOs. But that's not enough — we want to give them a forum that will include them regarding issues in their lives," Wu added.

Hu Tingxiu, a migrant worker who participated in the conference, spoke of her own experiences. She now works for Wu Jing's family, her first job as an *ayi*, or housekeeper. "I'm so lucky that I can work for Wu's family," she said. Over the past few years, Wu has hired several rural women, some of whom went on to get their college degrees while working at her home.

"China's floating population currently consists of about 120 million people," said Dr. Chen Xin from the Institute of Sociology of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences. "And it's estimated that 300 million migrant workers will have relocated to urban areas by 2020."

For this reason, the institute has cooperated with UNESCO to launch the "Together with Migrants" program nationwide. "We have established seven pilot sites for the project in China," said Genevieve Domenach-Chich, a programme specialist in social and human sciences for UNESCO. Local administrations and NGOs are cooperating in the project. "At least one third of migrants are females, and most of them are between 17 and 25 years of age. I'm glad to see different parties here care about their training, education and living conditions," she added.

Xie Lihua, secretary general of the Beijing Migrant Girls Culture Development Center acknowledged that there were still gaps between the government and NGOs in handling migrant workers. She said her center would put together a summation of the results of the conference and turn them over, along with detailed proposals and suggestions, to related national and regional government departments.



Zhang Liyong puts his English to good use with a foreign student at Tsinghua University's No. 15 cafeteria.

Photo by Wei Tong

Tsinghua Cook Has English Chops

By Wang Xiaoxiao

Many of the students of Tsinghua University, widely considered to be the cream of China's educational crop, have recently been shown up by a cook in the university's No. 15 mess hall. Zhang Liyong, 28, not only can make tasty food, he is a self-taught English expert.

After years of studying in his spare time, he has passed the difficult CET band four and six tests and scored a 630 on America's Test of English as a

Foreign Language (TOEFL).

Zhang comes from the southern reaches of Jiangxi Province and had to give up his education after his second year in high school because his family could no longer afford the tuition payments. Before he came to Beijing, he worked as a department director at a craftwork factory in Guangzhou, where he earned a decent salary. However, the prospect of working at Tsinghua University, even as a cook at a lower wage, was too

good to pass up and he made the move in 1996.

During the nearly eight years in which he has worked at Tsinghua, Zhang has dedicated a great deal of his spare time to auditing classes on English and international economics and trade at Beijing University. "It's not enough just to know English, you can only really develop well by also having some professional knowledge," he was quoted as saying in a *Beijing Youth Daily* report

on December 22.

After working at Tsinghua's dietary center for eight years, Zhang now is a team leader at the mess hall. His boss, impressed by his dedication, has given Zhang more time to study and sent him to take part in some English competitions on campus.

Zhang says he is very happy with his job and would like to continue working at Tsinghua and pursuing his own rigorous course of study.

Kidnapped for Love

By Hans Leu

A kidnapping in Liaoning Province in northern China came to a strangely touching end last week. The kidnapper, He Jianlin, 21, returned his seven-year-old hostage to his home on December 16 after taking good care of him, and even gave the child 1,000 yuan from the ransom money to buy candy. He was arrested minutes later.

According to a report in Shenyang-based *Business Times* on December 19, the young man told the police that his was an unusual crime of passion. He said that he fell in love with a girl in Siping, Jilin Province. He repeatedly invited the girl to dinner and wrote love letters to her, but she refused to go on a date with him.

Convinced that his financial troubles were the reason for his rejection, He started drawing up get-rich-quick schemes, and fi-

nally settled on kidnapping as the easiest and fastest path to money.

On December 11, he rented a small house in Siping's Tiexi District, changed his mobile phone number and bought a sharp knife.

Four days later, he lurked outside a primary school in neighboring Changtu County, Liaoning, until one boy emerged from the school by himself. He sprang out and forced the boy to get into a taxi with him at knife-point.

Once they were back in Tiexi, He locked the boy in the house and called the child's parents several times to settle on a ransom. The police uncovered his whereabouts by tracing the first phone call.

The ransom of 25,000 yuan was turned over on the morning of December 16. The police were not sure if He had accomplices, so they did not rush to immediately capture him

after he took the money. Before the police did take action, however, the kidnapper moved to send the boy home.

The taxi driver who took He and the boy back to Changtu told the court that the young man was very kind to the child, repeatedly telling him not to worry and that he would see his parents soon.

Outside the victim's house, He gave the boy 1,000 yuan and encouraged him to work hard to ensure he had a bright future.

The young man was captured 20 minutes after he released the boy, as the police had tailed the taxi the whole way.

He told the police that he loved children and had never thought of physically harming the boy.

He also said that he had planning to stay in Siping after the kidnapping in hopes of finally winning the heart of his beloved.

Paganini Winners Pluck Priceless Violins

By Guo Yuandan

Music lovers got a double treat last Sunday at the Beijing Exhibition Center Theater when two premier Chinese violinists gave performances on priceless old violins. The concert, titled Growing Melody II and sponsored by *Beijing Youth Daily*, featured Lu Siqing and Huang Mengla, winners of the Paganini International Violin Competition, and a collection of six antique violins made by masters Stradavari and Guarneri in the 17th and 18th centuries now worth a total of US \$20 million.

Lu, a native of Qingdao, Shandong Province, was the first Asian to win the gold prize in the Paganini Violin Competition in 1987 in Genoa, Italy when he was 18 years old. He personally negotiated the loan of some priceless old violins from the Stradivari Society of Chicago for concerts and exhibitions in China and has since held three concerts in this country using a total of 11 classic Italian violins.

The most recent show marked the first time for those six antique instruments to come to Asia. Three are creations of the biggest name in the history of violin making, Antonio Stradivari (1644 – 1737), and the other three were made by the famed Bartolomeo Giuseppe

Huang Mengla of Shanghai won the gold prize at last year's Paganini competition. Sunday's concert was his first performance in Beijing.

Crime Lord Executed after Third Trial

By Ma Jianfei

On Monday morning, the Supreme People's Court sentenced Liu Yong, head of a crime ring in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, to death. The execution was carried out later the same day.

Liu was first sentenced to death, as well as a 15 million yuan fine, by the Tieling Intermediate People's Court in Liaoning on April 17, 2002. However, after a retrial on August 11 this year, the Liaoning Higher People's Court granted Liu a two-year reprieve from the original death sentence.

In its judgment, the higher court stated that the possibility that Liu's confession was extracted through torture in the course of his interrogation meant that the original ruling was not tenable. Shortly after that statement was released, the Shenyang Public Security Bureau, which oversaw Liu's arrest and interrogation, responded with their own public statement that, "there was no possibility of torture," reported the Shanghai-based *Bund Pictorial* in August.

Media coverage of the discrepancy attracted greater public attention to the case. In the ensuing public debate, some legal experts speculated that the second court ruling safeguarded human rights, while many others were not satisfied with the weakened sentence. Many Internet users posted questions on website forums asking why Song Jianfei, Liu's main lieutenant in the gang, was sentenced to death and executed while his boss was not. In the end, the widespread public response ended up landing the case before the Supreme People's Court for retrial and final judgment.

During the trial, the court pointed out that from 1989 to 2000, Liu Yong committed a staggering number of crimes, including organizing, leading and actively participating in a mafia-style group, willful and malicious injury, theft, illegal business operation and illegal gun possession.

The court ruled that Liu's crimes were extreme and of great harm to society, and thereby overruled the higher court's judgment.



Viviane Reding and amateur Mao sculptor Wang Weihai Photo by Aily

EU Commissioner Visits 798 Factory

By Xiao Rong

During her visit to the 798 Factory art space last Saturday, European Union Commissioner for Education and Cultural Affairs Viviane Reding talked with Wang Wenhai, a retired curator of the Yan'an Revolutionary Memorial and amateur artist who has created hundreds of statues of late Chinese leader Mao Zedong.

Reding visited several commercial galleries and artists' studios in the factory area and spoke highly of the innovative center.

"I'm impressed by these artistic works' connection with reality. And I have never seen a working factory where artists co-exist and cooperate with workers," commented Reding. "It's a space of freedom and creativity, which is a wonderful thing to have in this city."

Located in the Dashanzi area northeast of downtown in Chaoyang District, the 798 Factory used to be a state-owned facility, but in the past couple years has developed into a Soho-like area, bringing together contemporary art, architecture, and culture in a historically interesting setting.



Hundreds of buses with advertisements run in the city; except, perhaps, Chang'an Avenue.

Photo by Cao Boyuan

Bus Adverts To Be Purged

Beijing government considers forbidding advertising on buses running on Chang'an Avenue

By Chen Ying

The Beijing Municipal Administration Committee has just released a draft of the new version of Beijing Outdoor Advertisement Setting and Management Measures on its official homepage (www.bjmac.gov.cn) on Thursday last week to collect suggestions from citizens. If the draft is passed, all the advertisements on buses running along Chang'an Street will have to be removed.

The draft proposes forbidding all advertising at the following roads and districts: on Chang'an Avenue from Jianguomen to Fuxingmen; Tian'anmen Square; the Diaoyutai State Guesthouse in

Haidian; the foreign embassy areas; the state administrations; schools; and at landscape areas and cultural relics.

A spokesman for Beijing Bus Company complained that the rules would also apply to buses running from north to south and crossing Chang'an.

Advertising is increasingly big business in Beijing. You can find ads everywhere on buses in Beijing, even on the tickets. Is it reasonable to pull all the advertisements from the street? Opinions follow:

An old Beijing woman, requesting anonymity

As one of the symbols of the nation, Tian'anmen Square is really meaningful to Chinese. It's also world famous, so

removing advertisements from buses on the square would be a positive step.

Shenfeng, commentator from Beijing Times

According to the laws and ordinances of advertising management, only illegal adverts should be forbidden. Obviously, some items of the draft are unreasonable.

Though the reasons might be high minded, this regulation runs against the growth of the economy. The advertising industry has become a point of growth for China's economy.

It's absolutely rational and legal to forbid an advertisement on a bus if it offends public morals. But in this case, it is not consistent with the social

development tide as well as the spirit of the law.

Dongfang, Shenfeng, commentator for Southern Metropolitan Daily

I'm really surprised about the draft. I think there is no essential difference between Chang'an Street and other roads. For me, the buses passing Tian'anmen Square don't have any special meaning just because they run in that area. Also the buses here are not different from others out on the Fourth Ring Road.

Ivana Angioni, Italian tourism expert and writer

In Europe, adverts are everywhere. I think it's okay if a company can improve its service quality by raising money

through advertising. For me, Tian'anmen Square is a good place to advertise. It depends on what kind of advertisement is put up. It's normal to find ads in the center of Rome. If the government doesn't want commercial advertisements in important parts of town, there are still other choices. For instance, my research focuses on tourism. I would like to see more information about tourism in Tian'anmen Square.

Because foreigners coming to Beijing usually haven't enough time to visit many other interesting places in Beijing or China, it would be convenient for them to get more information about China's history and art there.

By Wang Xiaoxiao

It seems people in Zhuzhou, Hunan Province, haven't been showing enough respect for city sanitation. Garbage is thrown everywhere, sanitation workers are disrespected and people won't pay the municipal charges for keeping the streets clean. So the authorities decided to stop cleaning the streets for two days. They will not have been disappointed by the effect.

On December 4, Zhuzhou municipal government gave its sanitary workers two days off. "On December 3, I was told to ask all sanitary workers to stop their work on December 5 and 6 by the municipal government. All the workers should stop cleaning, collecting the daily garbage and moving it to the refuse dumps. I just couldn't believe it, because even during the Spring Festival vacation, sanitary work never stops. But when they told me their purpose, I understood," said Mr. Zhou the director of the office of environmental sanitation of the Zhuzhou Municipal Administration Bureau in a report in the local newspaper, *Dongfang Xinbao* on December 7. But he was still a little afraid that citizens might complain about the mess their government deliberately allowed to build up.

What's that Smell?

Zhuzhou government aims to teach citizens a lesson

zhuzhou became a giant refuse dump in just two days. The key streets such as Jianshe Lu and Xinhua Lu and the railway station became cluttered with rubbish. The garbage lined the streets for several kilometers.

It was a particularly bad day in the local markets. Because of the smelly air inside and the dirty water running everywhere, customers seemed to lose interest in perusing the local goods. In the Lusong Clothes Market, the owner complained that his turnover had fallen by 50 percent because of the "garbage mountain" in front of his door.

According to an official of the Office of Environmental Protection, under Zhuzhou Municipal Administration Bureau, the city has a population of 700,000, creating thousands of tons of garbage every day. The city has more than 1,400 sanitary workers to cope with the mess, but the residents aren't exactly helpful and more than 60 percent of the

cleaning charge cannot be collected as people simply refuse to pay. Given this civic indifference to public sanitation, the government decided a profound lesson was needed.

But not everyone thinks it was such a great idea. Some have complained bitterly about lost revenue while others derided it as a naive prank. Some locals thought the government had chosen an effective method of promoting city sanitation. Opinions follow:

Xiao Yayu, Secretary of Zhuzhou Municipal Committee

I'm satisfied with the effect. This is what we wanted. It's much better than propaganda and is more effective than some kind of sanitary examination. The "strike" of the sanitary workers this time made several important points. First, it arouses the respect of citizens towards sanitary workers and their work. Second, citizens may realize the importance of environmental protection.

third, people might now be more considerate and try to ease the sanitary burden on the city.

Mr. Wu, an official from the Office of environmental sanitation under Beijing Municipal Administration Committee

It's not that people don't know the importance of public sanitation, it's just a matter of habit. If you remember the problem with SARS, everyone started paying attention to the public sanitation. No one was spitting in the streets. But now, the situation has gone back to normal. The Beijing government intends to do something about this, but it takes a lot of time. Personally, I don't think Beijing will do the same thing as Zhuzhou because Beijing is much bigger and such an action could cause chaos.

Besides, leaving rubbish everywhere could harm people's health.

A citizen in Zhuzhou

It's ridiculous for the gov-

ernment to make such a decision. If they want to let us know the importance of the police, will they stop the police from working for two days? Our two days' life without sanitary workers was torture and punishment. But why should all citizens suffer and be punished when just a few of them don't respect the sanitary worker's work?

Han Ning, a middle school student

Well, I think the Zhuzhou government is very brave and smart. A government should do whatever it can to help its citizens. And different methods work for different citizens. Perhaps, the street propaganda might not draw any interest and attention from Zhuzhou people, but the two days will make them pay attention.

Chris Anderson, an Australian student in Beijing

I don't think my country or my city would do the same as Zhuzhou. Unlike the sanitary workers in China, they earn decent money in my country. And I don't think we look down upon them. Also, we don't spit or throw garbage around because you could be severely punished for that.

Readers & Leaders

Poor and Rich under the Same Sky

Shida Zhu

When SARS was rampant, one of the lessons people learned was that it posed a threat to everyone, rich and poor alike. People came to realize that unless the richer areas of society helped less fortunate areas, it would be impossible to restore public health. We all live under the same sky.

A recent economic report by the World Bank served a wake-up call, warning of growing differences between the city and the countryside and expanding differences in the growth of per-capita income.

The report warned that poverty and inequality in income are threatening sustainable economic growth in China.

China has had great successes in the last 25 years in helping about 400 million people move above the poverty line. But the World Bank report indicated that poverty reduction efforts have slowed and that the income gap, especially between coastal areas and the hinterland, is growing.

This is caused principally by the fact that there are more and better job opportunities in the coastal areas than in inland cities and rural areas. Barriers to the flow of human resources is another factor. This could result in continued stagnation in rural and under-developed areas, and a vicious cycle. If this problem is not properly tackled, it will affect China's growth.

The 16th CPC national congress set the target of building a well-off society in China. That requires improving income for all, and a more equitable distribution of job opportunities.

In the process of promoting fair and rapid economic growth, it is imperative to build up a sound social security system to assist the less fortunate, the old and the disabled. This is of particular importance for social cohesiveness and public support for the reform efforts. In the meantime, it is also necessary to improve education and public health services in the poverty-stricken areas. Many Hope Project schools have been built and students from poor families have been helped. But it is still far from enough. There are still many boys and girls, girls in particular, waiting for help. Another problem that confronts underdeveloped areas is talent flight. Students that go to big cities for higher education seldom return. There is an alarming absence of the high-quality talent that is essential for economic growth in the areas that most need it. Only by improving education and developing local talent can poverty-stricken areas have a bright future. The improvement of public health services in these areas is also essential for the national efforts to ward off such a disaster as SARS.

The Chinese government is well aware of these problems and is taking measures to cope with them. The strategic decision to open up China's west is one of the efforts to improve the conditions for economic growth and help the poverty-stricken areas to get rid of the curse of poverty. Efforts have been made to cut the market barriers and to integrate the Chinese market and make it more flexible.

China boasts a huge domestic market, one of the assets that can help it to cope with any possible international financial crisis. 70% of China's output goes to domestic demand, and China will account for 7% of the world's export volume by 2007, up from 4.4% in 2001. China's revenue doubles every nine years. Its much-coveted rapid economic growth and size is the key to luring international investment and the main advantage in narrowing the difference in income between the city and the countryside and between the provinces.

(The writer is a senior research fellow of the Institute of American Studies, Chinese Academy of Social Sciences.)

We welcome your letters and articles, preferably around 700 words. Please give your full name, current address and phone number (not necessarily for publication). You can email us at comment@ynet.com or fax us at (010) 6590 2525.

The views expressed in this column are those of the authors only and do not necessarily reflect the editorial stance of Beijing Today.

By Zhao Hongyi

Like the subzero temperatures outside this winter, the domestic energy market is facing a looming freeze in supply. The national media has been deliberating recently over three major problems: a sharp decrease in coal production in Shanxi, electricity shortages in Shanghai and problems in diesel supply in the Yangtze River delta.

Some analysts have claimed this is the start of an energy crisis long considered virtually inevitable in a country with such a rapidly growing economy. Others believe it is the result of structural problems in China's energy industry, largely inherited from the planned economy. Both sets of opinion agree that a major energy crisis will come sometime in the next two decades unless major reforms take place.

Coal production shrinking in Shanxi

For the past decade, China has been the largest coal producer and consumer in the world. It produced 1.2 billion tons and consumed 1.4 billion in 2002. Shanxi Province, to the west of Beijing, holds one third of the country's known coal deposits and yields a quarter of total annual production.

But China's coal capital has seen its production decrease by one third, nearly 40 million tons, in the past three months.

Giant power consuming enterprises in the metallurgy and power generating enterprises are the principle victims.

"Prices are higher for domestic than imported coal," Pan Jiping, section chief for coal supply of Taiyuan Iron & Steel Mill complained to *Beijing Youth Daily*. The price of the high-grade coal used in Pan's mill has risen from last year's 200 yuan per ton to 650 yuan per ton this week.

Haixin Group, a private metallurgy enterprise in the province, has already turned abroad and signed a contract to import 70,000 tons of high-grade coal from Australia.

The coal shortage in Shanxi is also threatening the normal operation of a number of power generation mills in South Korea which rely on the province's coal.

The main reason for this seems to be a government-ordered shutdown of the province's many small coalmines, on safety grounds.

Shanxi has more than 6,000 small mines, forming nearly two thirds of the mines in the province. Most of them are township ventures or privately owned. These small mines produce one third, or around 100 million tons, of the province's annual coal production. But due to the lack of adequate technology and management, accidents and disasters are common.

In August this year, three disasters in the northern part of the province resulted in the deaths of



Desperate for coal: a parking lot in Shanxi is dug up to get to the coal underneath.

Photo by Photocome

Is This An Energy Crisis?

nearly one hundred miners. Since November 13, big gas explosions have occurred in five other mines, killing one hundred more miners. The central government in Beijing and the provincial authorities finally decided to close the 6,000 small mines for safety inspection. Though one third of the closed mines have since reopened, a significant decrease in production is inevitable.

"If you ask me which is more important, uninterrupted coal production and supply or the sustainable development of our coal industry, I would choose the latter," an official with the province's agency for coalmine security supervision told *Beijing Youth Daily*.

Electricity hungry in the Yangtze River delta

Another area feeling the energy pinch is the Yangtze River delta. This time, the problem is electricity.

Zhejiang Province started noticing problems in meeting local demand for electricity last winter. The province's power stations simply can't provide the electricity required by the big cities in Zhejiang. It is estimated there could be daily shortages of as much as 1.3 million kilowatts in the province next year.

Jiangsu Province has the same problem. On November 6, the provincial authorities warned

there would be daily electricity shortages during the winter of around 3.65 million kilowatts.

Even Shanghai is anticipating a daily shortfall of 2 million kilowatts. The municipality can generate only 11 million kilowatts each day, compared with daily consumption of 13.2 million kilowatts. This figure is expected to increase by 1.2-1.4 million kilowatts per year for the foreseeable future.

These electricity problems have, of course, been damaging the local industries' production.

The power shortages in Zhejiang have affected local cement production, driving prices from an average 230 yuan per ton up to 350 yuan per ton. This, in turn, damages the local construction industry which has become a pillar industry.

In Shanghai, the authorities say they are reconsidering their industrial development priorities, and they may limit the development of large scale, energy-thirsty plants.

Twenty one provinces and municipalities around China have reported electricity shortages so far.

The shortages have developed from the previously seasonal strains to a year-round problem," Yan Maosong, a professor at the University of Shanghai told *China Business*. Yan is also a member of

a panel of experts on the newly established State Power Regulatory Commission (SPRC), the watchdog founded by the central government early this year to oversee the reform of the power industry and the development of a new power network.

The most obvious problem is that thermal power plants rely on coal and coal prices have risen to a level they cannot afford. Coal stocks in Jiangsu have dropped to a historic low of 900,000 tons.

"The deeper reason is that each province has its own independent power transmitting networks," explained Mr. Yan. "Due to technical problems and differences of opinion over acceptable prices, electricity distribution across provincial borders is hard to organize."

Diesel dropoff

Diesel is the third part of the energy crisis facing China.

In the Yangtze River delta, diesel has been in short supply since September. The strain spread rapidly to every corner of the country, including Beijing, Hebei, Henan, Shanxi, Shaanxi, Jilin, Liaoning, Fujian and Guangdong. Diesel prices have been pushed close to 3,500 yuan per ton, unprecedented in the past five decades. Retail prices have increased from 2.5 yuan per litre to 2.85-3.5 yuan per litre.

The strain led speculators to buy up stocks of diesel and sell it off at higher prices. Though Sinopec and PetroChina, the two domestic oil production giants, have increased daily supply in Shanghai by 5,200 tons from their production bases in the northeast, the strain is still serious in many other cities and provinces in the delta.

This time, market speculation is being blamed as the major cause of the turmoil. But the unexpected petroleum demand increased by the rebounding economy nationwide after SARS is believed to be another factor. Besides, due to the coal and electricity shortages, demand for diesel has also increased, particularly among large enterprises.

Steps to ease the pain

On December 21, the State Council called for the country's power industry to accelerate the pace of developing a modern power transmission network, as well as continuing to reform electricity prices in a more market-oriented direction.

On the same day, Pu Hongjiu, vice chairman of the China Association of Coal Production promised that coal production would reach 1.7 billion tons next year, to fully meet the increasing demand."

"We started the construction of 107 large scale coal mines with

an annual production volume of 143 million tons last year," Pu said. "Some of the new mines have produced 50 million tons this year, which means we still have nearly 100 million tons of production capability to explore next year."

On December 22, SinoPec announced it would cease diesel exports from the beginning of next year. The oil giant had already lowered diesel exports to 2.2 million tons for 2003.

Energy industry's analysis

The three stories have their own backgrounds. The policy makers, market observers and businessmen have different views on the long-term prospects and development of China's energy industry.

"An energy crisis is coming. We have come to a watershed," says Wu Chengying, a consultant of the State Development and Reform Commission. "The problem is whether to raise energy prices or continue the endless increase in energy consumption." Wu insists that energy prices in China are too low compared with other countries.

The State Development Research Center, a think tank under the State Council, supports Wu's views on the seriousness of China's energy situation.

"China has very low access to energy, on the whole. Our average oil deposits come to 2.6 tons per head, and our natural gas reserves amount to 1074 cubic meters per head. Our coal deposits amount to only 90 tons per head." The center lists the figures in a new report and insists that new policies must be drafted to discourage excessive energy consumption and encourage the development of energy-efficient technologies and industries.

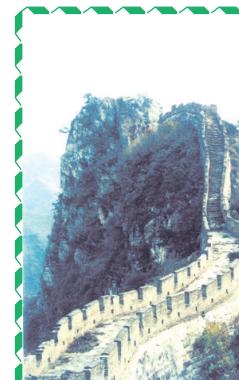
Lai Youwei, a researcher at the center, insists that through industrial adjustment and technological improvement, "we can bring down energy consumption, or slow the pace of increase at least."

Mou Shuling, senior vice president of SinoPec believes natural gas should be a rich and replaceable energy source, particularly in power generation and urban household uses. Mou believes that natural gas use could increase from its current level of 2.7 percent of the nation's total energy consumption to 10 percent at least.

Fu Yucheng, the new president of China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC) is also optimistic. Fu insists that China is not yet facing an energy crisis. "What is happening these days is a supply strain only," he said. "It is not caused by a shortage of oil supply; instead, it is because of our unreasonable energy consumption structure and inadvertent marketing channels."

"We are not yet facing a crisis, but we have to get prepared."

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By Su Wei

Twenty nine years ago, nine men were digging a well near their village when they discovered some unusual fragments of pottery. They reported it to the local authorities and when experts arrived at the scene they began to unearth one of the most extraordinary archeological finds in history: thousands of terracotta statues of warriors and horses built to guard Emperor Qin Shihuang in the afterlife.

As a reward, the authorities gave the men 30 yuan to share between them. The men considered it enough at the time, but now they want something more; not money, just recognition that they were the ones who discovered the Terracotta Warriors. Five of the men have already passed away, but Yang Xinman, 66, Yang Peiyan, 75, and Yang Quanyi, 76, have belatedly presented an application for a certificate naming them "Discoverers of the Qin Terracotta Army" to the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum and Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Bureau. It's believed to be the first case of this kind in China.

Hello, what's this?

The men were just digging a well in Xiyangzhu, Xiahe Village, Lintong District, Xi'an, Shaanxi Province. "It was on March 29, 1974 when we were digging in the south west of our village, looking for water," Yang Xinman, head of the team of workers, told *Beijing Today*. "After having dug four meters, we noticed some fragments of arms, legs and arrow heads made from pottery." The other men with him were

We Found the Terracotta Warriors!



Yang Peiyan, Yang Zhifa, Yang Quanyi, Yang Wenxue, Yang Wenhai, Yang Yanxin, Yang Yizhou and Wang Puzhi.

Yang Xinman said they then reported their finding to Yanzhai Commune which then reported it to Lintong Cultural Center. Zhao Kangmin from the center identified the fragments as belonging to the ancient Qin Dynasty.

After news of the discovery was published by *People's Daily*, an archaeological team from Shaanxi province arrived at the site in July 1974 to begin their explorations. The site where the men had been digging is now described in the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum as Pit One of the site, where 6,000 warriors and horses were found. It is the largest of the three sites that were excavated. Following the discovery of Pit One, Pit Two and Three were brought to light in April and May of 1976.

Just want a little recognition

Yang Xinman says he never considered asking for something from the government until the mid-1980s. "I was brought up not to ask for anything in return for whatever I did for my country and I know the Terracotta Warriors belong to the country," he said. "But the more I was interviewed by newspapers and television stations, the more I was asked if I had any certificate to prove that I was one of the men



Some of the terracotta warriors in the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum

Photo by Photocome

who discovered the statues."

He believes such a certificate would be an honor given by the nation. "We fulfilled our obligation to protect and report the cultural heritage when we discovered it. Why should we not have recognition? Without a cer-

tificate, the value of what we did will not be clear," Yang added.

"In 1985, I signed a certificate for Yang Xinman, Yang Zhifa and Yang Yanxin, to praise their discovery of the statues," says Zhao Kangmin, 68, retired director of Lintong Museum. "But it cannot be regarded as a formal document as a museum does not have the necessary administrative power."

Yang Xinman says they have asked for their names to be listed in the introduction of the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum so that later generations will remember their contribution. "I cannot understand why the introduction in the museum only says it was some peasants in Xiyangzhu who discovered the Terracotta Warriors. I want my name to be written into history alongside the discovery of the statues," he said.

No, we found it!

The three men complained to *Beijing Today* that there are now "fake discoverers" signing autographs for visitors in order to make money.

Yang Xinman says he and Yang Peiyan both earn up to 1,000 yuan per month from signing autographs for tourists. He says they were invited by storeowners to sign names for visitors around three years ago. In front of their names, they all add the words "The Discoverer of the Terracotta Warriors".

Yang Zhifa, one of the nine peasants, told *Beijing Today* he did not want any government certificate, even though he claims to be the first man to find the pottery fragments. He says that besides him there were three others actually digging the well. "But I was the one who dug out the first fragments, though Yang Yanxin was digging beside me," he says. Yang Zhifa now earns around 800 yuan per month signing autographs for tourists.

Zhao Kangmin, the retired director of Lintong Museum told *Beijing Today* that he was the real discoverer. "Just seeing something cannot be considered discovering it. These peasants just dug out the fragments. They did not know the value of them," Zhao said.

Zhao also says he does not want any kind of certificate, even though when he signs an autograph he signs it as "the First Person to be involved in the discovery, identification, naming and unearthing of the Terracotta Warriors". Zhao says he doesn't really earn any money from his autographs, "just some pocket money."

Meanwhile, on December 14 Lintong Water Conservancy Team also presented an application to be recognized as discoverers on the grounds that they had suggested digging a well on the site that the nine men chose.

Zhang Jianjun, manager of the Friendship Shop in the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum, who invited Yang Zhifa to sign autographs at the shop, is in no doubt as to the reason all these

people are claiming to be the discoverers. "It is because of the commercial value as a discoverer of the warriors," he said. "They can get tips as high as US\$10 per signature." But he's curious why they didn't try to get formal recognition as discoverers back in the summer of 1998 when former US President Bill Clinton visited the museum. Yang Zhifa was even asked by the local government to shake hands and take photos with Clinton and give him a book on the history of the warriors with his signature.

What kind of certificate?

Wang Jianhong, legal consultant of the Emperor Qin's Terracotta Museum tells *Beijing Today* that the museum does not have the authority to issue a formal certificate. "But we have handed all the applications to the relevant government department," he said.

According to the Cultural Heritage Law any individual or organization that discovers, reports and hands in cultural heritage items in order to protect them, should be given proper reward.

Chen Anli, vice director of the Cultural Heritage Department of Shaanxi Cultural Heritage Bureau, says they are considering how to deal with the application. "We need to find a legal basis to decide whether they should be recognized as the discoverers."

The discovery was made eight years before the Cultural Heritage Law came into effect and even that contains no clause about the definition of discovery or the effective period to entitle such a right," he said. "Also we do not have any official records about who discovered the warriors, just some media reports."

Duan Qingbo, a researcher of Qin and Han Dynasties at the Shaanxi Archeology Research Institute, believes the men's application is understandable. But he also believes more attention should be given to clarification of the concept of discovery by archaeological professionals, and also by ordinary people. "Can discovery by ordinary people be understood in the same way as those in the relevant academic field?" he asked.

Mao Jiaxing, the lawyer hired by the three men says that recognizing them as discoverers could help promote protection of cultural heritage and make people more active in bringing cultural finds to the attention of the authorities. He also points out that most discoveries are accidental, so it's useless to deliberate on whether people know the true value of what they have found.

An official of the State Administration of Cultural Heritage, who requested anonymity, told *Beijing Today* there was nothing wrong in the men presenting their application. "But it is only the country that can be called the discoverer, as the peasants just discovered a small part of the find," he said.

A Football Nightmare

By Hou Mingxin

Two years ago, a group of young Chinese football players arrived in Chile thinking they'd hit the jackpot. They had just signed up for a program promising to take them to South America to learn the famous skills of the likes of Pele and Diego Maradona. Their boyhood dreams were about to come true.

In the first half of 2001, Pan-America Asia promised Xu and other boys an opportunity to train in South America.

"They told us they would send us to South America to play football and it would be for free," Xu told Xinhua.

"Good thing like that don't exist, I told myself at the time. But then they held a press conference in Beijing and a vice-secretary of the Chinese Football Association and Bora Milutinovic, the then head coach of the Chinese national team, attended. Since these top guys came, I believed the offer was true," Xu recalled.

The first disappointment for Xu came when the company told him he wasn't promising enough to be granted a free trip and would have to pay 130,000 yuan in order to go.

In August 2001, Xu and ten other boys were selected by the company to study football for two years in Chile.

When Xu was on the plane, he found the sportswear the company had provided him with was fake and he suddenly had a sense that the whole program might also be fake. "But I was already on board and had paid the money, so there seemed to be no choice."

On August 7, 2001, the 11 boys arrived in Chile and began receiving training at a football school, supposedly run by a local football club.

One month later, the cooperation between the company and the local school ended abruptly.

One morning in April 2002, the manager of the team ordered the 11 young players to leave the school with him and to go to Uruguay. But they were detained at the airport by the Chilean authorities. The truth was that the team owed the local school some money and wanted to escape.

At the customs, Chilean staff told them: "You swindlers will never be allowed to come back to Chile again." One week later, they finally arrived in Uruguay.

Xu said his life in Uruguay was a nightmare. They had to walk 40 minutes to participate in training. The training they received was basic and was con-



Xu Lei and his family say it is his photo with Bora Milutinovic that made them believe the offer was true.

Photo by Zhou Wei

ducted on a pitch that was in terrible condition. Soon, because they weren't getting enough nutrition, they couldn't summon the will to go for training. Some of them even had to eat dog food.

The young players naturally wanted to return to China, but their passports were all held by the company. Some boys managed to steal back their passports and escape.

Xu's knee was injured while he was playing in Uruguay, but the company refused to pay for treatment. As the injury wasn't able to heal properly, Xu's playing career is now probably over.

Inside story

Last Friday, a Xinhua report published some inside facts disclosed by a source who declined to give his name but said he had been an investor in the football study program.

He said that in the first half of 2001 he'd been persuaded to invest by Zhang Xiaolei, the general manager of Pan-America Asia. Zhang said his plan had received recognition from the Chinese Football Association (CFA).

Zhang also had sufficient connections to be able to invite a CFA official and Bora Milutinovic to the company's press conference, making the plan more attractive to investors.

The source, who told Xinhua he had previously invested in the domestic and international football market, decided to invest a total of 4.2 million yuan in Zhang's plan.

Pan-America Asia set up a training base in Hainan, with Milutinovic's private assistant invited to be a coach at the base. Then they published advertisements in the domestic media to recruit young players to study football in South America. Each player was eventually charged 130,000 yuan. The Chilean partner was a man named Franc-

esca, a friend of Milutinovic's private assistant.

Xinhua's source told them he had gone to Chile in January 2002 to supervise the use of his funds. In Chile, he found out that Pan-America Asia had signed two different contracts with Francesca's school. The Chinese version said the Chinese players had signed training contracts with the professional club the school was supposed to be attached to, while the Spanish version said they had merely signed contracts with Francesca's school.

It turned out the school was just renting a ground from the football club and had no other relationship with it.

Francesca hired a 20-year old coach, who the players said obviously had little experience of training a team.

Sometimes, the Pan-America Asia manager of the team would organize for them to play a match with a local youth team. Though these were mostly amateur teams, the manager told his players these teams were the youth teams of professional clubs, and charged them money he called "league fees" to play them.

Gradually, funds from Pan-America Asia started to dry up. The cooperation with Francesca's school came to an end and the team had to move to Uruguay.

Pan-America Asia's Uruguayan partner was also a small school. Again there were two different contracts, and the same false claims that the school was attached to a professional youth team.

But there was still the problem of limited funds and conditions began to get worse.

The source told Xinhua some of the money he had invested had been used by Zhang Xiaolei to buy houses for his ex-wife and mistress.

Lawsuit begins

Over 20 of the young players have decided to sue Pan-America Asia.

Xinhua revealed last Friday that the players had video evidence, provided by a Uruguayan TV station, of the terrible conditions they had been living in. Xinhua also reported that since the intervention of the Chinese embassy in Uruguay and pressure from the media, the remaining players had been moved into better housing on December 11. Now they've got running water and electricity again for the first time in four months.

Zhao also says he does not want any kind of certificate, even though when he signs an autograph he signs it as "the First Person to be involved in the discovery, identification, naming and unearthing of the Terracotta Warriors". Zhao says he doesn't really earn any money from his autographs, "just some pocket money."

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With friends in Pakistan



By Yi Lijing

Lai Xiaoping is not an easy person to describe.

She was a renowned painter in her native Singapore, but in China she's better known for helping to set up many of the charitable Hope Project schools. She also used to study anthropology but she threw that in when she decided she needed something more challenging. Having been a lecturer at Singapore Art College she is now the managing director of a multimedia company. So what is her real vocation?

"What interests me most is to find a regional culture and learn to understand their local customs, practices and economic development. It gives you a sense of the evolution of the human race. It's the best way to understand more, and to enrich your experience and life".

Perhaps that's why, in 1997, she left her comfortable and affluent life as a painter in Singapore and set out on the open road on a solo journey, traveling through remote areas of western China, Pakistan, India and Iran. It was to take her nearly five years.



Painting used to be her whole life

Bare essentials

"I joined a climbing club in 1989 and I scaled some fairly intimidating mountains but I never really found it totally satisfying. I think the most beautiful thing is not the scenic spots but the people you meet there. So I decided to set out on a trip through some of the more desolate areas from Urumqi in Xinjiang to ARI in northern Tibet."

All Lai brought with her was a knapsack with the bare minimum of essentials. Sometimes she was even reduced to writing notes on toilet paper. "I just used anything I could find. I didn't want to take too many things with me as it would just be a burden. I didn't have much money. Though I had just sold a series of paintings for US\$220,000, I'd donated the money to various causes such as setting up the Hope Schools."

Lai Xiaoping didn't set out with a specific route or destination. In all her years of traveling, she just looked for communities and then spent time there, studying the local languages and culture. She found that

'What interests me most is to find a regional culture and learn to understand their local customs, practices and economic development. It gives you a sense of the evolution of the human race. It's the best way to understand more, and to enrich your experience and life'.

what she learned through her real-life investigations was different from what she had read previously. More and more, she felt what she was doing was more instructive than all her studies in anthropology.

Sleeping with 20 men

On her way from Xinjiang to Tibet, Lai had to get from Yecheng to ARI. It was a difficult road to get along with no buses and few vehicles of any description. At last a big truck came along and Lai was able to hitch a lift.

The road from Yecheng to ARI is nearly 2,000 kilometers long, and is known locally as "the Road To Death". The road passes Daban City, and reaches an altitude of 6,700 meters. Lai kept trembling with cold and in the first three days she couldn't sleep due to the lack of oxygen. She couldn't get a good meal and was reluctant to bother the driver to stop specially for her to go to the toilet, so she stuck to drinking just one small bottle of mineral water every day.

Sleeping was also a bit of a hardship as there were no hotels on the route. On the third day, the truck came upon a group of workers



On the road

repairing the road. They decided to ask if they could sleep together with them. In the tent, there were over 20 men, many of whom hadn't had any female company for years.

"In fact, I was very afraid at that time," says Lai. "So I tried to gain their trust by talking to them. I had visited some of their hometowns which they hadn't been back to in years, such as Yecheng and Kashgar, and I told them what they were like now. Even though I was the only woman, they started to look at me as a friend. As a

matter of fact, these people were very pitiful. Because there was something wrong with supplies, they hadn't had proper food for three days. And when they heard about their hometowns, some of them wept."

She still felt afraid though, and she had nightmares about what might happen to her that night. She cried out three times. The next morning, the foreman of the workers asked her: "Why did you cry out last night? Are you afraid of us?" In order not to hurt their feelings, Lai lied and said, "No, I was dreaming about a wolf."

On the fourth day, the truck came to the peak altitude on the route, and Lai was afraid breathing would become even more difficult. "Four of the men with us had serious headaches, and wanted to leave as soon as possible. But I suddenly felt that my breathing became smooth. I had a sense of flying, and I felt that my whole soul would break away from my body. It was wonderful."

Running a restaurant in Pakistan

At the end of 1999, tensions between Pakistan and India became heated following nuclear tests and much saber rattling on both sides. Tourist industries in both countries naturally felt the impact as visitors fled. This made the life of many common people in Pakistan



I can be a good cook too.

Photos provided by Lai Xiaoping

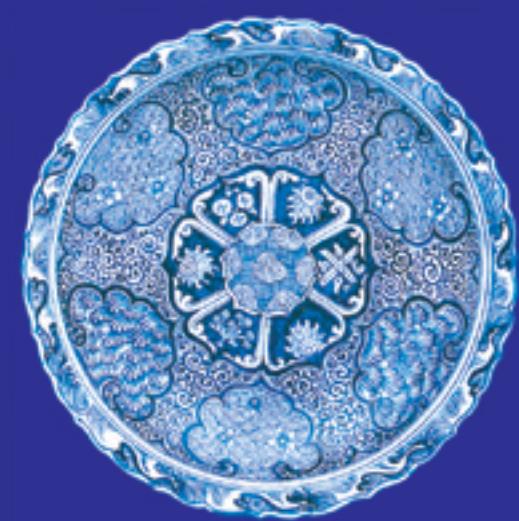
far harder. At the time, Lai Xiaoping had arrived in a mountain area in the east of Pakistan. She met a family who had been running a small restaurant. They had always relied on tourists but business had dried up. Lai decided to help them run the restaurant and try and make ends meet. She would work from 6 am in the morning till midnight, making her own specialty food. It was fairly unusual in the area and helped attract enough customers to keep the restaurant going.

It was tough going as there was no proper heating where she was staying and winter was coming. She washed rice and vegetables in the cold water and got innumerable small cuts on her hands. But Lai wanted to show the local people that they could make use of the resources available and live in other ways even if there were no tourists to bring in money.

A few months later, after the situation had calmed down, business at the restaurant had revived and Lai decided to move on.

During her time in Pakistan, Lai had difficulty dealing with some of the more traditional attitudes. Many people were suspicious of foreign women such as her. But Lai persevered and tried to help where she could. She helped set up Hope Schools in mountainous areas of Pakistan. People who had been cold towards her came to love and appreciate her.

Now Lai is back on the road to other new experiences. In 2002, she returned to Singapore and sought different ways to fulfill her many talents. She has worked as an Advisor to the Development Department of the Pakistan Embassy in Singapore. And in 2003, she finally gained her PhD in Culture and Anthropology. Somehow, she's also found time to work as a television chef for CCTV, serving up some of those local Pakistani specialties she learned, no doubt.



Yuan Dynasty blue and white Chinese dish, 14th century

New Book on Topkapi Porcelain

By Chen Ying

The Beijing Yanshan Publishing House brings out a brand new book on priceless collection of ancient Chinese porcelain at the Topkapi Palace Collection this month: *Chinese Treasures in the Topkapi Palace*. A press conference was held at the Turkish Embassy Wednesday night last week to fete the book launch.

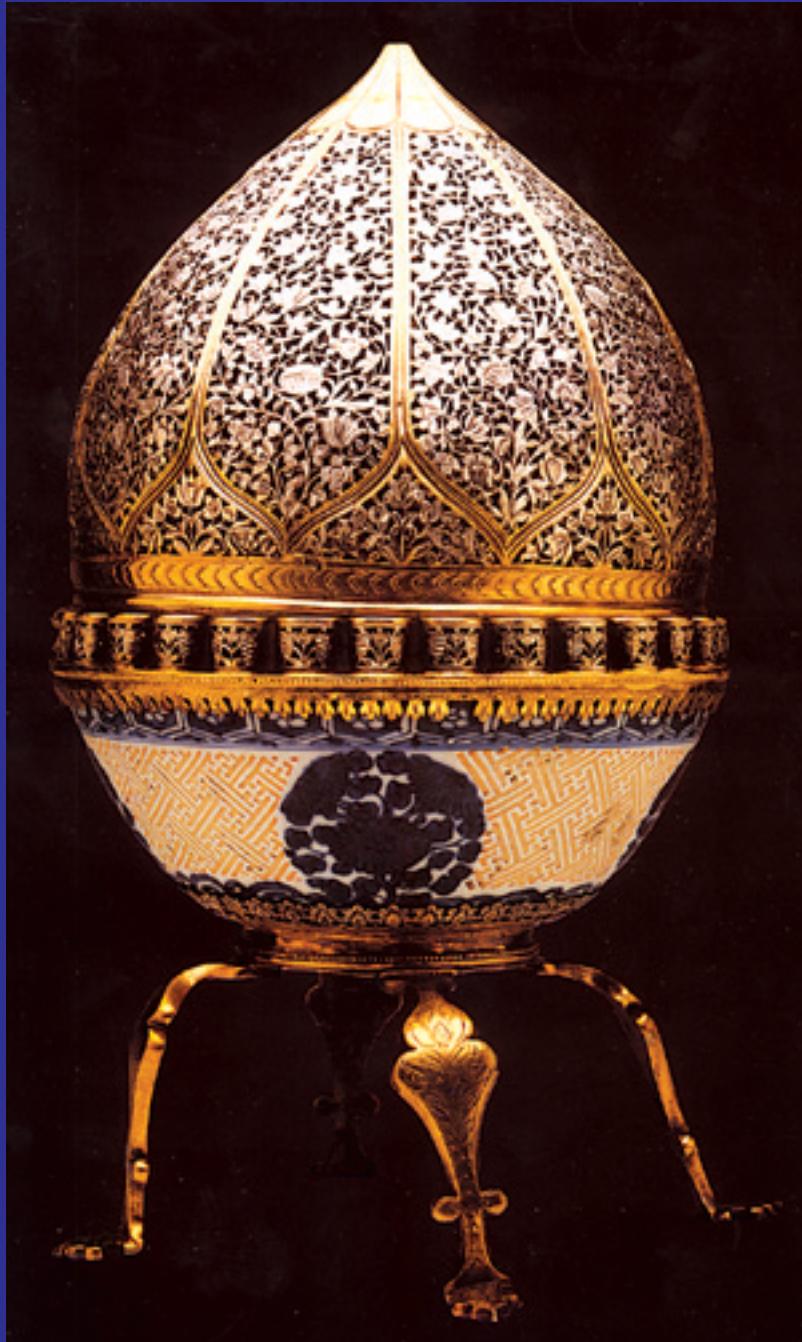
The book results from the visit of Chinese experts to the collection in Turkey, from March 28 to April 7 in 2001. The collection was first made famous by an American researcher who published his book in the 1950's.

The only book to introduce all forty Yuan Dynasty (1279 – 1368) blue and white porcelain at Topkapi, *Chinese Treasures in the Topkapi Palace* resolves some key questions about Chinese porcelain history. The visit and subsequent book produced several new discoveries about Chinese blue and white porcelain: shifting the birth of Yuan Dynasty blue and white porcelain to an earlier date, discovering the place of origin of early blue and white porcelain cobalt production and demonstrating the influence of Chinese celadon on Western Asian celadon porcelain.

"The new book will be meaningful to China's porcelain history," said Jiang Qiqi, general manager of the Cultural Imprints Consulting, organizer of the recent visit to Turkey.

"From the point of view of a Chinese ceramics historian, if you do not study the Turkish connection to Chinese ceramics, you are performing a grave injustice to the study of Chinese Ceramics," says former director of the Chinese Ceramics Antiquity Research Institute, Feng Xianming, in first paragraph of the book's preface.

Now a museum, the Topkapi Palace Collection features over 10,000 pieces of ancient Chinese porcelain from the Song Dynasty (960 – 1279) to the Qing Dynasty (1644 – 1911). Most are carefully



Ming Dynasty incense burner, porcelain with a silver cover, 17th century



Yuan Dynasty blue and white Chinese vase

preserved in the palace storehouse. "The palace's collections of Chinese porcelain may be the best and largest in the world," Turkish Ambassador to China, Rafet Akgunay, said in his congratulatory remarks about the book. "They have the irreplaceable importance to Chinese porcelain history, especially for 600-year period from 1300 to 1900."

Unlike the collections of many international museums, the Chinese porcelain collections of Topkapi were legally obtained through trade between ancient Turkey and China.

On this recent visit, Chinese experts were authorized by the Turkish Ministry of Culture to study "the national treasure storehouse" for three days. The Eastern Ceramics Exhibition Hall in the palace was especially closed for the Chinese experts to handle, examine and photograph this famous collection of Chinese blue and white porcelain.

"The new book has special meaning to Beijing since the city was once the capital to Yuan Dynasty," said Mei Ninghua, the director of Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics, in charge of editing the book. "Now we hope that Topkapi's Chinese porcelain can one day be exhibited in Beijing through the joint efforts of Turkey and China," Mei concluded.

Tang Tombs Found at Yizhuang

By Yi Yi

Over 40 ancient tombs covering an area of 200,000 square meters were discovered at Yizhuang Development District in the southeast suburb of Beijing. The Beijing Bureau of Cultural Relics released the news to the press Saturday, after a one-month excavation of one third of the total area.

Two of the excavated tombs were confirmed as Han (206BC – 220AD) and Tang (618 – 907) Dynasty tombs. Experts from the bureau noted that this was the first time such large-scale ancient tombs were found in the southeast of the capital, indicating the previous existence of massive dwelling quarters in this area of Beijing.

As this recent discovery only covers five ancient tombs, archaeologists remain unsure of how large the entire tomb area is. Despite well-documented Ming and Qing tombs in Chaoyang and Haidian districts, tombs were not expected to be found in Yizhuang. Daxing country, where Yizhuang is located, was within the flood area of the Yongding River and therefore not expected to support high-density inhabitation. This latest discovery has significantly corrected previous knowledge about Yizhuang.

The rectangular, single-chamber Han tomb, of brick construction, measures 3.2 meters long, 1.7 meter wide, 0.85 meters high. It was emptied by robbers long ago, leaving scattered skeletons. Archaeologists found only bronze coins. In contrast, the Tang tomb was in better condition. Pottery, porcelain jars, bowls and plates were brought to light by excavators in the rectangular, single-chamber, brick Tang tomb which measured 4 meters long, 1.5 meters wide and 0.8 meters high.

The scale of the tombs indicates the existence of a city nearby, suggesting that Yizhuang was a relatively prosperous town. Questions as to which period the town belongs and what caused its destruction await further excavation and discovery.

Freezing of soil layers has resulted in temporary suspension of excavation. The Cultural Relics Bureau has the site under protection with the help of relevant Public Security departments.



Excavation site

Artifacts unearthed from the Tang tomb
Photos by Yang Yufeng

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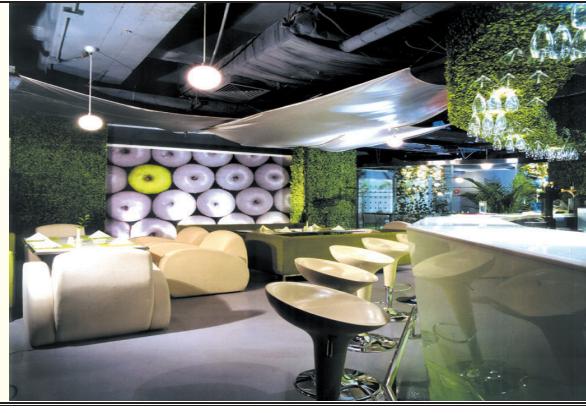
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Today, December 26, marks the 110th anniversary of the birth of late Chinese leader Mao Zedong. Mao's thoughts, theories and actions had tremendous impact on China and the entire world the past century. To remember and pay tribute to this great man, *Beijing Today* offers excerpts from a candid interview with Mao's daughter, Li Na, from the 20-episode documentary *Mao Zedong in My Eyes* filmed by the No.1 Compiling and Research Department of the Central Documentary Research Institute and Shanghai New Culture Television and Broadcasting Production.

My Father, Mao Zedong

An interview with Li Na, Chairman Mao's daughter



Mao Zedong at Lushan Mountain, his favorite summer retreat, in 1961

Narrator: Li Na, the youngest daughter of Mao Zedong, and her husband Wang Jingqiang lead a peaceful, quiet life in an ordinary apartment around Wan-shoulu in Haidian District.

The daughter of Mao Zedong and Jiang Qing, Li Na has always kept a low profile and refused to accept any honorary titles. Most Chinese know little about this reclusive woman and she is considered relatively mysterious by the general public.

Li Na: I was not called Li Na when I was born, my parents officially changed my name to this many years later. When my older sister came to Beijing from north-eastern China after liberation, my father decided to choose the character *na* from a sentence in *The Analects of Confucius* as my given name. The given name of my older sister, Min, was also chosen from the same sentence. The literal meaning of the sentence is, 'A gentleman should be diligent in business and cautious in speech,' which advises people to value action over words.

Narrator: Li Na was born in Yan'an in August 1940. She had a happy childhood under the care of Mao Zedong during the war when the situation was arduous and dangerous. Mao nicknamed his daughter his 'big doll,' while Li Na called her father 'little daddy.'

Li Na: When I lived in Yan'an, I was not old enough to go to school. Since all my brothers and sisters were in the former Soviet Union at the time, my father needed a child to stay beside him to make the family atmosphere cheerful, so I was not sent to

nursery school. I left Yan'an with the troops in 1947 when I was only six years old.

At first I stayed with my father. I slept like a log when we crossed the blockade line and knew nothing about what happened around me. Soldiers carried me on their backs as they marched, or sometimes I was tied to a simple, shabby saddle and put on a horse. That's how I left Yan'an.

Narrator: Under his heavy workload, Chairman Mao ate and slept irregularly. In the end, his beloved Li Na became a secret

weapon used by his aides to get him to rest.

Li Na: When I was very young, it was my task to make him take breaks. People would push me into my father's room to play with him when they saw he was too tired. Eventually, I understood what they were up to and that my father needed rest. Since my father loved children, he could not help but put down his work and play with me, and thereby rest a bit.

Narrator: Mao liked to talk to children and introduce them

to ideas or teach them ancient poems or children's songs.

Li Na: My father loved children's games. For example, he liked to join us when we would build little houses and offered to help, and he'd get completely absorbed in it. When we took walks when I was three or four years old, he taught me poems, like verses from Du Fu's poetry. Actually, I didn't go to school until I was 10 years old. Before that, I was taught by my parents and the people who looked after them.

Narrator: Li Na started her formal education in Beijing after the founding of New China. At first, Mao's assistants sent her to school in a car, because her school was far from the government center of Zhongnanhai. When he heard about it, Mao stopped the practice immediately, labeling it a type of corruption.

Li Na: I ended up boarding at the Yuying Elementary School. Students were allowed to go home on the weekends. When my father said I could not be driven in a car, the people who looked after him arranged for a bigger vehicle, a van that could hold around 20 people, to transport all of the kids whose parents lived in Zhongnanhai.

Narrator: From the time she was very young, Li Na had the habit of keeping in close touch with her father, and later she wrote him reports on what she was doing and thinking in college.

Li Na: I went to Shiyan High School, a girl's school where nearly all the students were children of senior party and government officials. But things were totally different when I went to university. Most of my schoolmates then were from ordinary families of workers and peasants. I really benefited from that environment.

My soul was touched greatly by the campaign of learning from Lei Feng. I felt it was necessary for me to change into a student just like other students who were healthy both physically and mentally. I wrote fewer letters to my father during that period of time because I wanted to really think things through and change myself completely.

Narrator: Li Na studied at Beijing University around 1960, when China was facing serious crises from three years of natural disasters that hit most of the country and the complete withdrawal of assistance from the Soviet Union. Many people were suffering, many starving. Mao

was very worried and cut his own food rations, giving up eggs and meat for a long time. He only asked his cooks to prepare nicer foods for his daughter when she came back home on weekends or vacations.

Li Na: He insisted on not eating meat or eggs. His legs became very swollen. I remember I used to eat a lot when I went back home. Now I feel terrible about it, it was not a thoughtful thing to do. I should have pushed my father to eat instead of sitting there and eating it all myself. I did not learn better until years later because he never said anything.



Mao Zedong playing table tennis at Yan'an in 1946

Narrator: Li Na went swimming with her father when she was very young. Mao Zedong demanded his daughter swim on her own instead of using floats or a life preserver.

Li Na: He never used floats. He swam slowly, but he could swim about 10 to 20 kilometers when the tide was low. His purpose for getting us to swim was to build up our physical strength and willpower. For example, when a storm and great waves came, he would ask us all to jump into the sea. Usually he jumped first, so we had to follow him. Sometimes it was very hard. His teaching by example was very important.

Narrator: Mao Zedong always required his children to be noble and pure-minded and free of vulgar interests.

Li Na: My father was strict with us because he placed all his hopes on his children. He did not want us to be scientists, politicians or writers, he wanted us to be normal people who earned a living on our own labor. We were influenced by his actions and words, and would echo him in being hardworking and thrifty. I would never had achieved anything if it were not for my father's strict discipline. I miss him. He was a good father.

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Swan Lake: Four Variations



Sun Jie (left) and Zhu Yan perform Swan Lake as part of the first Beijing International Dance Festival.

Ballet plays a prominent role in the first Beijing International Dance Festival which runs from December 12 to January 20, 2004. Beijing ballet-goers can enjoy four different versions of *Swan Lake*.

China's Central Ballet Ensemble, China's best ballet troupe, has garnered recognition for its technical mastery of western ballet skills infused with Asian culture. They

staged their latest version of *Swan Lake* last weekend at the Century Theater. Top soloists took to the stage including: Zhu Yan, Zhang Jian, Wang Qimin and Sun Jie. The show retains traditional elements of *Swan Lake* while updating it with laser multi-media technology.

The Russian National Ballet Theatre bring their world-famous artistry and technique to

bear on their version of *Swan Lake* at Tianqiao Theater from December 27 to January 1, 2004. The troupe has promised to send its best dancers for the Beijing performance.

The Belarusian Ballet performs *Swan Lake* from December 28 to 31 at Beizhan Theater. One of the most celebrated ballet companies of the former-USSR, the troupe boasts 20 world-famous ballet stars, a

long tradition of fine ballet and a profound aesthetic sense.

The last version of *Swan Lake* will be performed at the Great Hall of the People from January 12-14 by the National Ballet of Cuba. Under the direction of the well-known Alicia Alonso, the National Ballet of Cuba ranks among the top in the world for its unique energy and ability to present the classics with a contemporary feel.

Photo by Cui Jun



Hosts and Eason Chan (center) at the 26th Top Ten Chinese Gold Songs Award Ceremony

The 26th Top Ten Chinese Gold Songs Award

The 26th Top Ten Chinese Gold Songs Award presentation ceremony was held in Hong Kong last Friday. Music superstars Jacky Cheung, Anthony Wong, Hacken Lee, Joey Yung, Gigi Leung and Denise Ho plus 20 other singers appeared at the press conference. Awards were presented for Top Ten Chinese Golden Songs, Global Chinese Gold Song Award and Most Popular Singer Award.

Winners of the "Top Ten Chinese Golden Songs" were: Joey Yung (*My Pride*), Group Twins (*Kite and Wind*), Hacken Lee (*Marriage After Being Long Together*), Miriam Yeung (*Pity I am Aquarius*), Lo Candy (*Sanjiao Zi*), Eason Chan (*Ambush from Ten Directions*), Andy Lau and Tony Leung Chiu-Wai (*Infernal Affairs*), Fong Alex

(Contributed by Guo Yuandan)

DA DA Band's Christmas Gift

DA DA band released their long-awaited second album *Golden Age* this month. Innovative and emotional, *Golden Age* features *You Are Different*, *Wu Shuang (Never Be the Same)*, the Nokia 3108 ad jingle, which has already become popular in China mainland, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Singapore, Malaysia and other parts of Asia. The music video for *Deng-dai (Waiting)* cost over a million HK dollars, sponsored by the Hong Kong China Entertainment Television Broadcast Ltd.

Founded in 1996 in Wuhan, Hubei Province, the four members are: singer Peng Tan, Guitarist Wu Tao, Bassist Wei Fei and drummer Zhang Ming. Their good looks and clean musical style resulted in their being the first Chinese mainland rock band to be signed by the Warner Records label. In the same year, 2000, they released their first album *Angel*.



DA DA band

WORLDWIDE



Scarlett Johansson

Palm Springs Fest to Fete Threesome

Golden Globe-nominee actress Scarlett Johansson, Oscar-winning writer Sidney Sheldon and *Cold Mountain* production designer Dante Ferretti will each be honored at the 15th annual Palm Springs International Film Festival awards gala, on January 11.

Johansson, who last week earned a pair of Globe nods for her roles in *Lost in Translation* and *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, will take home the inaugural Rising Star Award.

Sheldon, who won an Oscar in 1948 for writing *The Bachelor and the Bobby-Soxer*, will receive the Sonny Bono Visionary Award from the musician/politician's widow, Rep. Marcia Bono.

Ferretti will be presented with the Career Achievement Award for Production Design at a separate event whose time has yet to be determined.



Lesley Ann Warren

Warren Sets Table for Indie Eat

Lesley Ann Warren is teaming with an ensemble cast that includes Jack Klugman, Michael Lerner, Shiri Appleby and Mili Avital for the indie comedy *When Do We Eat*.

The story revolves around a Passover seder at which the family patriarch is slipped a dose of Ecstasy by one of his kids, "igniting conflict and

chaos on the way to healing and redemption," said producer Steven J. Wolfe (*Twin Falls Idaho*).

The comedy – from director Salvador Litvak – also features Ben Feldman, Max Greenfield, Adam Lamberg, Meredith Scott Lynn and Cynda Williams.

The film is shooting in Los Angeles.

Glory Days for Springsteen at Concert Box Office

Bruce Springsteen was the top concert draw across North America in 2003 with over 1.6 million fans paying to see his marathon show and hear his musings on the struggles of the working man.

According to data published on Tuesday by concert trade publication Pollstar, the 54-year-old New Jersey rocker grossed US\$ 115.9 million from 47 shows to lead this year's rankings. His tour ranks as the second-biggest of all time, behind the Rolling Stones' 1994 outing, which grossed US\$ 121.2 million.

Far behind in second spot this year was Canadian pop singer Celine Dion with US\$ 80.5 million from 145 shows – all of them from her new custom-built theater at the Colosseum in Caesars Palace, Las Vegas.

As usual, veteran acts dominated the list. The Eagles took the No. 3 spot with US\$ 69.3 million from 55 shows, just ahead of Fleetwood Mac with \$69 million from 71 shows, and indefatigable pop diva Cher with US\$ 68.2 million from 102 shows.

Rival trade publication *Billboard* recently reported that the Rolling Stones were the top act for 2003 followed by Springsteen and Cher, but its tally was based on worldwide sales, and included dates from the last six weeks of 2002. By Pollstar's reckoning, the Rolling Stones ranked at No. 14 with \$38.5 million from just 14 shows as they spent most of the year criss-crossing Europe and Asia.



Bruce Springsteen
Reuters

Edited by Guo Yuandan



The domestic media has dubbed Kim Chang Back the "devil coach" for his strenuous training regimens, his success and care for his players cannot be denied.

Pushing for Glory at Athens

— An interview with Kim Chang Back, head coach of the Chinese women's national field hockey team

By Hou Mingxin

Since taking the helm of the Chinese national women's hockey team in 1999, head coach Kim Chang Back, a native of South Korea, has led the squad to be one of the dominant powers in world field hockey. The Chinese women won last year's Championship Trophy and were victorious at the 2002 Asian Games, and took silver at the 2003 Women's Championships in Australia earlier this month. What are Kim's secrets for turning the team's fortunes so quickly? On Monday, he accepted an interview with *Beijing Today*.

Beijing Today: In daily life, you are a gentle husband and a good father, but on the hockey field you are very different. The domestic media has dubbed you the "devil coach".

Kim: Family life and training are two totally different states. In common family life, it's easier for people to become friends and to understand each other than on the training field. There are only two possible results in hockey, win or lose, so you have to go all out for victory. That makes it different from normal life. They call me the "devil coach" because I am so strict, but why am I like that? Victory!

Beijing Today: It has been reported that your team has a heavy training load, around six to eight hours every day. Is that true?

Kim: In countries with top hockey teams, many players start getting formal training when just six or seven years old, but in China, few start playing hockey before the age of 16 or 17. There are only around 200 solid women hockey players in this country, compared to thousands in many nations with advanced hockey conditions. Other factors hampering the development of hockey in China include field conditions and players' salaries. All this means that our team has a lot of catching up to do to get to a truly advanced level. And that takes a lot of training and efforts by the whole country.

Beijing Today: Recovery and rest after training is very important to athletes. What kind of recovery methods do you use after putting your team through such punishing training?

Kim: Actually, I don't have any special method, I think taking it easy is the best way for players to recover. I encourage my players to relax with their families and friends and totally forget their training. That's what I do with my family, but as the coach, it's tough to completely forget about the team, our matches and our training.

Beijing Today: In China, some injured or sick athletes are pressed to keep training by their coaches for the reason that it's all a question of attitude. What do you think about such practices?

Kim: I don't really know about the situation on other national sports teams, but I would never permit something like that on my squad. Some people think that because I am the "devil coach," I force players to train or play in matches when they are sick or injured, but it's not true. I just give my players heavy training loads.

Beijing Today: If one of your key players was injured before an important match, such as the Olympic finals, what would you do?

Kim: At the quarterfinals of last year's World Cup, two of my top players were injured, but I did not put them on the field. To me, my players are more important than our results. Plus, if the players are unhealthy, the results will not be good.

Beijing Today: Among China's national teams, your squad is the second, alongside the women's volleyball team, to win a world championship. But the field hockey team is not nearly as famous as the women's volleyballers, to say nothing of the women's football team, which has never won a world title. What do you think about this situation?

Kim: I don't think you can compare hockey with volleyball and football. In China, volleyball and football are popular sports that generate a lot of interest, but few people know about hockey. I hope that more

Chinese will learn to love hockey through my work and efforts.

Beijing Today: Which would you prefer, a very skilled player with a strong personality making her hard to control, or a player with more regular abilities, but a serious attitude about training and willingness to take orders?

Kim: Hockey is a team sport, so team spirit is a crucial characteristic in all players. I would take the player with good team spirit.

Beijing Today: There have been reports of coaches beating their players in South Korea. Have you ever hit one of your players here in China?

Kim: First of all, I don't agree with that statement. Nowadays in Korea, as education has changed, fewer coaches are hitting their players. I have to admit that I have kicked a few people out of anger when they did not obey my requests, but I don't think it's a good way to act.

Beijing Today: You are said to have refused eating food for four straight days once because a player refused to train according to your requirements. Is this true?

Kim: It wasn't four days, it was seven. I actually didn't do that on purpose, it was just because of my personality - when I'm angry, I can't eat anything. At the same time, I hoped it would show my players the level of my expectations of them. It was not a good idea and I won't do that again.

Beijing Today: What's your plan for next year's Olympics? What is the biggest problem for your team?

Kim: I think the levels of the top four teams at this year's Championship Trophy (Australia, China, Holland and Argentina) are very close and each can beat the others. We are training hard for the Olympics and I think we could have a satisfactory result if all goes well.

Beijing Today: Does a 'satisfactory result' mean a gold medal?

al?

Kim: Anything can happen and nobody can foresee the result, but my players and I are confident we can take the gold.

Beijing Today: How would you feel if the Chinese team went up against South Korea at the Olympics?

Kim: Of course I am Korean, but I would never forget my position as head coach of China. Our team has met South Korea four times and beat them four times.

Beijing Today: Some reports say China has only 14 field hockey teams and around 500 registered players nationwide. Does that mean it will be tough for China to take the gold at the 2008 Olympics? Do plan to manage the national team then?

Kim: Since our team has achieved so much in the past few years, I've heard some provinces have increased their investment in hockey. If we do well at next year's Olympics, I think it will help Chinese hockey a lot and be important to performance at the Beijing Olympics. My contract with the Chinese Hockey Association expires in 2004, so it's too early to talk about 2008, I need to just focus on the present.

Beijing Today: You have been working in China for four years and achieved great success. What's the biggest problem for you in China as a coach?

Kim: First, language is a major problem for me, it's not easy for me to communicate with players.

Second, there are cultural differences; sometimes I find it hard to understand Chinese culture. And third, my time with my family is very limited.

Beijing Today: How many days a year do you spend with your family?

Kim: Last year, my family and I only had seven days together. I feel very bad about this for my family and my children. I wish I could have more time with them.

Chinese field hockey players celebrate their victory at the Bushan Asian Games last year.



Photos by Hu Jimin

Guangzhou to Bid for 2010 Asian Games

The southern Chinese metropolis of Guangzhou, capital of Guangdong Province, plans to bid to host the 2010 Asian Games with the approval of the central government, the city's media reported Monday.

The mayor of Guangzhou said the application would be submitted to the Olympic Council of Asia (OCA) soon.

The OCA is expected to send delegations to inspect facilities in all candidate cities

next February and March and the final decision for host city will be announced in June.

Guangzhou has never hosted an international sports event, but did hold the Chinese National Games in 2001.

Officials said current facilities would be updated to meet the needs of the Asian Games.

Busan, South Korea hosted the 2002 Asiad and Doha in Qatar will stage the event in 2006. (Xinhua)

Nedved Named European Footballer of the Year

Juventus playmaker Pavel Nedved, a native of the Czech Republic, was awarded the title of 2003 European Footballer of the Year on Monday.

The prize, known as the Ballon d'Or in French and handed out by France Football magazine, was awarded after a poll among journalists from the 52 countries affiliated to European football's governing body, UEFA.

Nedved, a pillar of the Juventus midfield who helped steer the team to a 2002-2003 Italian championship, dominated the contest with 190 of the votes.

The 31-year-old star's main rival, Thierry Henry of Arsenal, scored 128 votes while Paolo Maldini of AC Milan was third with 123.

The Czech, who also captained the Czech Republic to the Euro 2004 finals in Portugal, is in his third season with the Italian soccer club.



Juventus, helped by four goals from Nedved, led the Italian Serie A first division for much of the autumn, but was recently overtaken by AS Roma and now stands second.

It is the eighth time a Juventus player has won the Ballon d'Or.

Nedved has been playing in Italy since 1996, when he moved from Sparta Prague to Lazio. After five seasons at the Rome club, he went to Juventus in 2001 as a replacement for French star Zinedine Zidane.

(Xinhua)

Ferdinand Banned for Eight Months for Missing Drug Test

By Wesley Leilee

tember 23.

Ferdinand was also fined 50,000 pounds (\$88,000) for the infraction. His appeal against the ban means he can continue to play until the result of that appeal is known.

Ferdinand was left off England's squad in the last Euro 2004 qualifier match against Turkey in Istanbul on October 11. The match ended 0-0, enough for England to go through to the finals in Portugal as group winners.

Footballer Zhang Shuai Banned for Doping

By Zhang Bo

Zhang Shuai, defender for the Beijing Hyundai Football Club, became the first soccer player in China to be banned by his club for violating anti-doping regulations after a second positive test result on December 18.

In a random test held soon after a Division A match between Beijing Hyundai and Shanghai Shenhua on November 22, Zhang Shuai's urine sample test revealed traces of the banned substance ephedrine, which also resulted in Argentinean legend Diego Maradona's doping scandal at the 1994 World Cup.

Zhang has proclaimed innocence, insisting he ingested the substance accidentally when taking anti-cold pills before the match.

However, not all the intended punishment has been meted out. According to anti-doping regulations issued by the Chinese Football Association (CFA) in 2002, players found secretly taking illegal medicines during random tests are to be banned from playing for two to four years and fined up to 10,000 yuan. The head coaches, general managers and doctors banned players' teams can also face bans of up to one year.

The CFA will issue its final ruling on Zhang's case next week.

German Woman Refuses to Play for Perugia

By Wesley Leilee

However, Prinz has refused the offer, according to a CCTV report on Wednesday.

Prinz finished second to Mia Hamm in last year's voting for FIFA's World Player of the Year award and is one of three finalists for this year's prize, to be announced Monday.

Gaucci tried to lure Birgit

Prinz, a member of Germany's World Cup winning team, to Italy following the collapse of the Women's League in America (WUSA) where she had been playing.

Previously, Gaucci tried to sign Swedish strikers Hanna

Ljungberg and Victoria Svensson, though both turned down his offers.

Brazil Captures FIFA World Youth Title

By Wesley Leilee

in 1983, 1985 and 1993. Argentina lost the semi-final to Brazil 1-0 and was beaten by Colombia by 2-1 in the third-place play-off.

Asia teams United Arab Emirates and Japan exited of the tournament at the quarter-final stage. The Emirates could not find a way past Colombia as they went down 1-0, while an early blitz by Brazil sank Japan 5-1.



Xibahe Zhongli is one of the attractive "food streets" that are making Liufang Beili a prime dining spot.

While there is certainly no shortage of restaurants in this city, some of the best places to go to for Chinese fare are so-called "food streets," concentrated spots of restaurants that feature fine food at reasonable prices. Better transportation, growing affluence and a population increasingly willing to try something different has encouraged these dining centers to offer many regional cuisines that reflect the immense variety of China.

Heated competition along these streets only works to the benefit of diners, pushing restaurants to improve their decor, sanitation, food quality and range while paring down prices. And though many such streets, such as the one introduced this week, are clearly geared towards Chinese customers (meaning most restaurants do not have English menus), high levels of service mean staff are eager to help foreign friends navigate the ordering process.

One of the city's emerging dining hot spots is around the SAS Radisson hotel and the always-packed Carrefour supermarket near the International Exhibition Center. The main drag, a pleasant tree-lined street tagged Xibahe Zhongli, runs from the North Third Ring Road south to Liufang Beijie. With the exception of a few fast food options and a recently-opened UBC coffee shop, most of the eateries along the road are of Chinese style, but interestingly diverse at that.

One fun-named stand out is **La Popo**, or "Hot Grandma", a specialist in *shuizhuyu* (boiled fish in hot oil). It is just one of several hot pot-oriented restaurants in the area, competing with **Tianyuanji Huoguocheng**, which offers free Tsingtao beer, an outlet of the excellent **Xiaofeiyang** chain known for its cumin-rich soup and high-quality lamb, the Chongqing-style **Xia Huoguo** that cooks up tantalizing shrimp hotpot, and a branch of the outstanding **Fuhua** chain of beef hot pot restaurants.

The entrance the 'Old Beijing'-style restaurant **Jiumen Dahutong** at No.6 Xibahe Zhongli is guarded by stone lions and overall tries to recreate some of this city's traditional culinary glory. Waiters in old-fashioned garb and black slippers run

Think Nationally, Eat Locally



around the main dining area decorated with sepia pictures of Beijing circa the late 19th century. A long wall scroll carries traditional calligraphy while large golden coins are suspended from red ribbons.

Here, dining can be a hands-on affair for customers that chose to sit at the granite-topped tables with inset charcoal grilling areas. Skewers of fresh chicken breast, beef, lamb or prawns can be spiced and grilled to taste as diners much on

fresh cucumbers and other healthier snacks. It is a noisy place, but good fun and the menu has illustrations. Enough food to stuff two costs just 70 yuan.

South of Liufang Beijie, the stretch of Liufang Beili that runs to the Museum of Modern Art is home to many great local establishments such as the **Jixiangniao** (Tel: 6468 0808), a popular chain of Hunan specialists, and the traditional style **Tianyuanqiyun** (Tel: 8451

8861), which serves Hangzhou-style dishes in a classy, traditional atmosphere. Past a delightful bakery/coffee shop stand a fashionable Hunan restaurant and a more humble dumpling eatery.

Regardless of hour, diners are spoilt for choice. **Yilin Dabao**, (Tel: 6463 7111) a new restaurant next to the Garden Apartments, is bright, clean, warm and open 24 hours a day. Plenty of plants create a homely atmosphere. Large, back-lit photographs on the

Photos by Huang Ya'nan

walls display the restaurant's range of noodle dishes, porridges, miniature hotpots, set meals (rice, vegetables, pork and soup) and inexpensive freshly prepared steamed buns (*baozi*) available. The latter are great, available in egg with bean sprouts, sweet red bean paste, pork with vegetables and many other varieties, encouraging lengthy and inexpensive stays on cold mornings.

Diagonally across the street from Liufang Beili is a line of new restaurants, among the most popular of which is the **Minjiang Jiulou** Sichuan Restaurant that opened in November. Spotlessly clean, it is a fine place to warm the taste buds on a cold winter evening. Girls wearing white furry jackets and red *qipao* dresses welcome diners in English and the huge, well-illustrated menu takes a while to go through. Starters include *xiao mantou* (12 yuan), a set of six Sichuan-style mini-burgers, and tasty corn kernel pancakes (*tiebingzi*). Celery fried with cashew nuts is priced at a reasonable 18 yuan, but the menu includes far more fiery fare, such as *shuizhu*-style beef or fish, both of which are served in garlic-heavy, red-hot broth. Other interesting dishes include fried shredded potatoes with red chilies (*zhangcha tudousi*, 22 yuan), diced rabbit on a tomato bed (*jiangbaotudong*, 32 yuan), spicy crab (*xianglaxie*, 68 yuan) and shrimp fried with garlic (*suan su xia*) sold at seasonal prices. (Tel: 6462 3223; 11 am - 11 pm)

Equally popular is the **Dadu Sanqianli** Korean barbecue restaurant next door. Every table inside houses a stainless steel grill plate over a pit of hot embers beneath large white extractor vents. After munching on complimentary vegetable starters and piles of *kimchee*, diners choose their main meats from an extensive list, including slices of high-quality beef, lamb and fish, to be cooked over the grill. There is also an extensive range of non-grilled dishes.

The burgeoning Liufang Beili area offers so many choices for satisfying dining at reasonable prices that it negates the need to head downtown for a good meal. For people who live nearby, as well as those that do not, these streets house a diverse range of fun and reliable restaurants that is well worth investigating.

Kitchen Confessionals



French Chef Talks Cuisine and Kitchen Patience

By James Liu

Following his move from New Caledonia to Beijing, Frenchman Jean Marc Perrignon was appointed executive chef at the Novotel Xinqiao Hotel in October. *Beijing Today* interviewed this culinary master, who has nearly three decades of cooking experience, in hopes of distilling the essence and secrets of French cuisine.

Born in France, Perrignon served a four year apprenticeship in Paris and then was sent to Africa to work in the kitchen of a fusion-style restaurant for two years. That experience taught him to be open-minded and creative in his cooking. It also gave him the opportunity to incorporate such exotic ingredients and zebra and snake. "Zebra meat is different from horse meat, a little tougher," he recalls.

His flexibility is an important part of his mastery. "I know the basic recipes and rules for French cooking. I can apply these basic rules to new products and adapt the way they are cooked," Perrignon says.

The experienced chef proceeded to work his way up to executive chef and then traveled to take new jobs in Egypt, Turkey, the US, the Caribbean, the Middle East and French Polynesia. "As I traveled around the world, I had the opportunity to get familiar with many ingredients and materials. In the Middle East, I examined a cow before it was butchered, and that taught me to assess beef and how to cook different cuts the right way and for the right time," he says.

Another benefit of his global cooking experience is a solid understanding of how to manage a working kitchen. "I always respect and try to understand the culture of any country in which I am staying. I have learnt to be patient with my teams," Marc states. The prospects of working in China have him charged. "I am amazed by Chinese cuisine. I would like to study some Chinese herbs and put them in my menu," he gushes.

He calls his ideas of management the "running train theory," which is based on maintaining a fast pace, because slowing down can lead the train to stop. His main duty in his new position is to oversee the huge buffet at the Novotel Xinqiao's Cuisine Galley restaurant. "In the near future, I will add some cheese-based dishes to the buffet, because the French Chamber of Commerce will move into our hotel pretty soon," he reveals.

Perrignon believes in serving customers innovative French cuisine while also sharing his gastronomic knowledge with his staff and ensuring his menu includes only food of the highest quality. Diners at Cuisine Galley are sure to appreciate his expert touch and attention to detail, especially on Fridays when the spread includes desserts specially prepared by the master himself.

Stage

**The Vienna Royal Philharmonic Orchestra**

Founded in 1806, the Vienna Royal Philharmonic Orchestra comes to Beijing with young conductor Robert Zelzer at the baton. One of the oldest orchestras in Europe, they played with all the European music greats: Bach, Haydn and Mozart. The program will include works by Strauss, Mozart and Schubert plus Chinese works.

Where: Century Theatre, Liangmaqiao, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, December 27, 28 **Admission:** 580-880 yuan **Tel:** 6466 3311 ext. 3161

Russian Folk Dance

Having toured all over the world, the beautiful and skillful artists of the Russian State Song and Dance Theatre come to Beijing this holiday season. The program will highlight Russian folk dances to celebrate the New Year.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongsi Shitiao, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm, January 4 **Admission:** 180-880 yuan **Tel:** 6567 5049, 8580 3788

Ballet: Woman of the Red Army**(Hongse Niangzi Jun)**

This ballet relates the story of the struggle between a poor girl, Qionghua, and her evil landlord, Nan Batian. Set on Hainan Island before the liberation, this ballet is a classic.

Where: Poly Theatre, 14 Dongsi Shitiao, Chaoyang **When:** 7:30 pm December 29-30 **Admission:** 100-680 yuan **Tel:** 6500 1188 ext. 5126

Mao's Birthday

A concert celebrating the 110th anniversary of the late Chairman Mao Zedong's birthday on December 26 will be performed by the China Minority Nationalities Youth Philharmonic Orchestra. The Philharmonic Chorus of China Musicians Association will accompany them with song. The program includes: *Overture to The East is Red*, symphonic work *Ode to the Red Flag*, *The White-haired Girl Suite* plus choral numbers *Red Army Soldiers Miss Chairman Mao*, *The Sun Is the Reddest*, *Chairman Mao Is the Dearest*, solo *Glory of Chairman Mao* and more.

Where: Great Hall of the People, Tian'anmen Square **When:** 7:30 pm, December 26 **Admission:** 1,200-1,800 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

New Year's Symphony Concert

The London Philharmonic Orchestra performs with the Beijing Symphony Orchestra to usher in a prosperous new year.

Where: Great Hall of the People, Tian'anmen Square **When:** 7:30 pm, December 31 – January 1 **Admission:** 180-1,800 yuan **Tel:** 6406 8888

Experimental Drama

The Beijing, Taiwan and Hong Kong Experimental Drama Festival continues this week with *Black Hole Beyond* (*Heidong Zhiwai*) performed by Body Phase Studio from Taiwan.

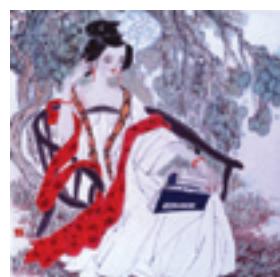
Where: North Theatre, Beibingmasi Lane, Dongcheng **When:** 17:30 pm, December 30 - January **Admission:** 80-150 yuan **Tel:** 6404 8021

Exhibitions

Pioneer Retrospective

This exhibition features works by the first generation of Chinese artists who went abroad to study Western painting styles, in the early part of the last century. Pioneers in combining Chinese and Western painting techniques, these artists include: Qin Xuanfu, Chen Junde, Yu Kewei and Chen Baoyi.

Where: Soka Art Centre, 101B Sky & Sea Business Plaza, 107 Dongsi Beidajie, Dongcheng **When:** 10 am – 9 pm, January 1 – February 28 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8401 2377

**Yi Ru's Solo Show**

The powerfully-colored mineral paintings by Yi Ru depict objects, people, and abstract images. This veteran artist specializes in Chinese traditional painting.

Where: Fafa Art Gallery, 2 Xiangjiang Beilu, opposite the Riviera Garden, Chaoyang **When:** 9 am – 10 pm, December 28 – January 11 **Admission:** free **Tel:** 8430 2587

Pyramid Adventures

The Egyptian National Treasures Exhibition features 143 cultural relics from ancient civilizations, a collection valued at US\$260 million. One of the most precious items on exhibit is a 2-meter-tall stone statue of Akhenaten, weighing in at 1.6 tons. Akhenaten, known as "the heretic Pharaoh", ruled Egypt about 3,300 years ago. Although part of the collection from the National Museum of Egypt, this sculpture will be exhibited abroad for the first time in Beijing.

Where: National Museum of China, Tiananmen Square **When:** 8:30 am – 4:30 pm till January 5 **Admission:** 50 yuan for adults, 30 yuan for students **Tel:** 6512 8901

Jams

The World Is Waiting for Us

Though Japanese pop sensation Pizzicato Five disbanded a couple of years ago, individual members are still making music. Founding member Konishi Yasuharu teams up with Ready-Made International musicians Yoshinaga Yusuke and Nomoto Karia to revive the art-pop/concept noise that first made them famous.

Where: Cloud Nine, 7 Sanlitun Beijie, Chaoyang **When:** 9 pm, December 31 **Admission:** 280 yuan (in advance), 380 yuan (at entrance) **Tel:** 6417 8318



Music

Karen Mok Solo Concert

A Hong Kong pop star noted for her sexy image and unique sultry voice, Karen Mok has released 19 albums and won Best Female Mandarin Singer at this year's Taiwan Golden Song Awards. Her New Year's concert in Beijing promises to deliver her usual punch.

Where: Capital Stadium, 54 Baishiqiao Lu, Haidian **When:** 7:30 pm, December 26 **Admission:** 380-1,000 yuan **Tel:** 6833 5225

Movies

Shadow Magic (Xi Yang Jing)

Directed by Ann Hu, *Shadow Magic* stars Xia Yu, Jared Harris, Liu Peiqi, Lu Liping, and Li Yusheng. A fictionalized account of when cinema was first introduced into China and how China's first films were made in the early years of the last century, *Shadow Magic*'s narrative is woven around a few widely documented facts about the birth of Chinese cinema. Chinese with English subtitles

Where: Cherry Lane Movies, 29 Liangmaqiao Lu, Chaoyang **When:** 8 pm, December 26-27 **Admission:** 50 yuan **Tel:** 13901134745

Jade Guanyin (Yuguanyin)

Directed by Xu Anhua, *Jade Guanyin* stars Vicky Zhao, Xie Tingfeng, Chen Jianbin, and Sun Haiying. Adapted from Hai Yan's novel, this film tells a story of An Xin, a policewoman, who falls in love with a man who turns out to be a drug dealer. After having his illegitimate child, she discovers even more horrifying secrets about him. In Mandarin.

Where: UME International Cineplex, (Huaxing Guoji Yingcheng), 44 Kexueyuan Nanlu, Shuangyushu, Haidian District **When:** from December 30 **Admission:** 50 – 70 yuan **Tel:** 6261 2851



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By Guo Yuandan /Wentong

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By Bruce Connolly

Hainan Island, with its warm annual climate and delightful coastline, is rapidly becoming one of China's top holiday destinations. Located in the South China Sea, it is a tropical paradise for visitors escaping Northern winters. Most holiday-goers head directly to the southern resort of Sanya, famed for its fine beaches. However, the island features many fascinating yet little-explored facets, not least its capital, Haikou.

With many fine buildings, Haikou has the appearance of an international, progressive and fast-moving city. At night, it becomes a 'City of Lights' when its wide palm-lined boulevards are bathed in green. Modern, yes, but behind its facade lies a long history.

In the days of Imperial China, Hainan was regarded as the 'Tail of the Dragon' or the 'end of the earth'. It was an island of backward tribes and a few 'settled' areas around the coast. So difficult was the place to live in that writings of that time described it as the 'Gate of Hell' and indeed it became home to exiled officials from central governments of that time.

Haikou

One of the oldest buildings in Haikou is the Five Ancient Celebrities Temple (wugong si), constructed in the Ming Dynasty from 1573 - 1619. It memorializes five famous officials: Li Deyu of Tang Dynasty and four Song Dynasty officials; Li Gang, Li Guang, Zhao Ding and Hu Quan. During the Tang and Song Dynasties, they were banished to Hainan for speaking out against what they felt were wrong practices by the Emperors. The temple, set amidst ponds fed by thermal springs, holds their statues and recalls their sad stories.

Haikou sits where the Nandu River opens out onto the Qiongzhou Straits, a 30 kilometer stretch of water separating the island from the mainland. This strategic position off the mainland, along with a natural harbor offering protection from typhoons, resulted in Haikou becoming a major port.

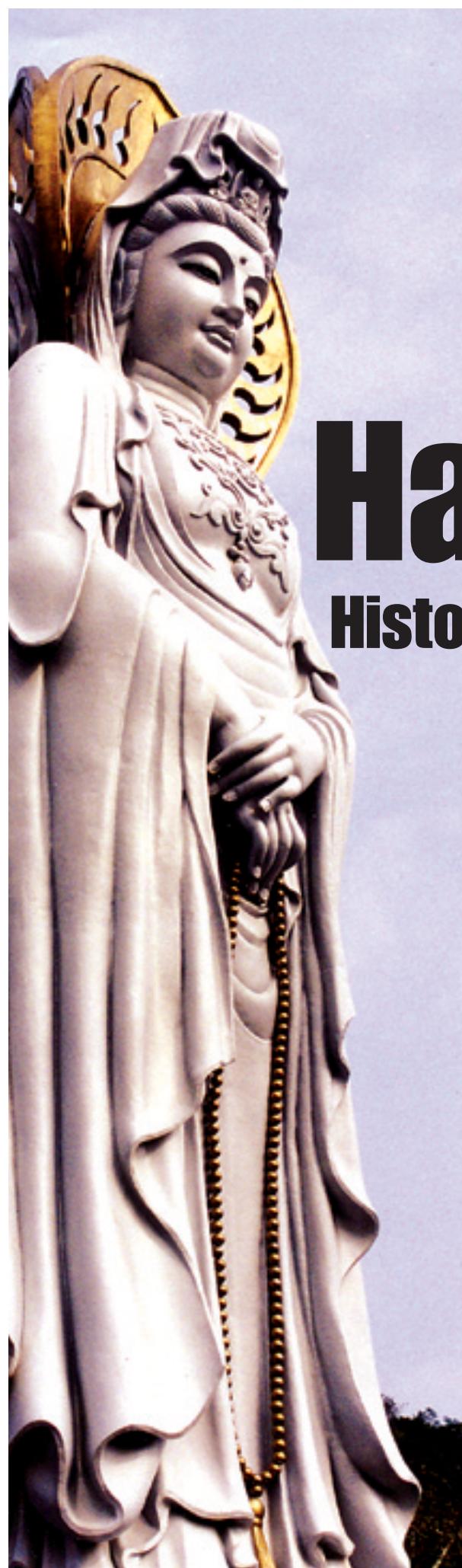
For hundreds of years, traders in wooden sailing ships followed the Maritime Silk Route from southern Europe via the Middle East, India and South East Asia to Haikou. Traders brought different cultures, food, language and architectural styles to Haikou which gradually blended with local designs to create the unique patterns found there.

The distinctive centuries-old 'Sino-Portuguese' architecture of the 'old town', built around the harbor, is a reminder of those colorful trading days. Narrow rambling streets, white painted three-storey buildings sheltering the sidewalks and French-style wooden-slatted shuttered windows are all part of the historical legacy of Southern China. There is a resemblance to other enchanting cities such as Macau and Penang in Malaysia.

Establishments which supplied ships with essential goods for their onward journeys were concentrated in the 'old town'. Today, still engaged in commercial trading, this area remains energetic and colorful. At the old harbor, picturesque wooden sailing vessels continue to carry large clay vats filled with pickled vegetables while timber-framed fishing boats are still built with age-old methods.

Nearby, bustling streets are home to a vibrant market area. The ever-present mix of traditional and modern music combines with bicycle bells, two-stroke engines, taxi horns, and people talking excitedly in local dialects to create an unforgettable atmosphere enhanced by the varied cooking smells from brightly-lit sidewalk food stalls. Even at midnight, crowds of people continue to feast on local delicacies. Table after table are filled with steaming corncobs, sweet potatoes, chicken legs, skewered meat and fried or boiled vegetables in cauldrons of spicy red liquid.

The covered markets sell spices, traditional Chinese med-



Nanshan Guanyin

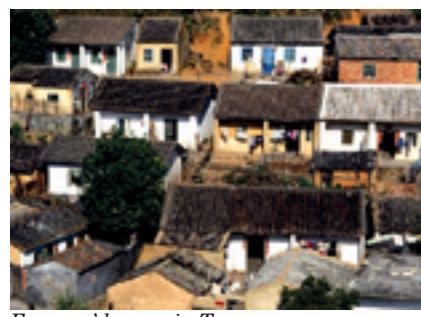
Hainan: History, Culture and Biodiversity



Yalong Bay



Li village



Farmers' houses in Tongza



Li women weaving in Tongza



Red Army girls



Old street in Haikou



Xinglong Botanical Garden

icines, cooking implements, bamboo furniture, ropes and fishing nets. Women wearing circular bamboo hats squeeze past on bicycles carts loaded with everything from bundles of brush to baskets of live chickens. Meanwhile, old men squatting in groups on the pavement play traditional Chinese chess.

Stretching west from the city, the palm-fringed coast is known as Holiday Beach and has been developed as a recreational area for city dwellers and tourists alike. An open-air disco, restaurants, barbecue pits, horseback riding and even a yacht club offer ample amusements for year-round outdoor enjoyment. Hainan Tropical Sea World was China's first tropical ocean sea park. Containing the Hainan Millennium Tower, it features active performances such as high diving, water ballet and cultural folk displays.

Volcanic Crater in Qiongshan

In nearby Qiongshan County lies the scenic attraction of the extinct Ma'anling Volcanic Crater (Ma'anling huo shan kou). This is one of the world's best-preserved double-cone shaped volcanic craters. A paved walkway leads up through gardens of tropical flowers and palms. On the slopes lie scattered remains of solidified lava flows, often showing signs of gas bubbles encased in the stone. Past a shrine to the Gods of the Volcano lies the crater itself. The dented middle forms the shape of a saddle, hence the name, 'Ma'anling' which means Saddle Hill. Seen from coastal Guangdong, it must have looked really impressive, indeed awesome, when it was active.

Aquapolis Bo'ao and Qionghai

From Haikou, the Eastern Expressway heads south to Sanya. It passes through a serene landscape of tall coconut palms, rubber plantations, farmers with buffaloes ploughing wet paddies and bright green fields of young rice - picture book images of tropical China.

Near Qionghai City is Boao Aquapolis, the locale of the 2001 Asian Forum and site for future annual conferences. This area resembles coastal Florida with its residential and holiday villas set amidst well-kept lawns, surrounded by flowering plants, lagoons and waterways.

Not far from Qionghai, the Memory Garden of the Detachment of Women is dedicated to a band of local women who served the revolution in the 1930's and fought against the Japanese occupation. Helping to protect the People's Liberation Army in Hainan, the woman recruited local peasants to join the fight. Their story is depicted in a famous revolutionary ballet (Hongse Niangzijun), which is still performed today.

Near the entrance, girls carrying imitation rifles and dressed in grey military uniforms of that period parade before a prominent bronze statue depicting two of the fighters. A replica of a landlord's house contains a re-created water prison: a tiny cell with a flooded floor for incarcerating peasants who could not pay the required dues to the master. Inside the house, large murals and photographs graphically depict the women's struggle. Some were captured and sent to prison in Guangzhou, others were executed.

Hot Spring City: Xinglong (兴隆)

South past dense forests is the town of Xinglong, famed for its hot springs and luxurious hotels set in exotic tropical gardens. Local roads are landscaped with flowering shrubs growing on well-manicured grass verges. Beyond are rubber trees and a natural environment of verdant, lush tropical growth. Buffaloes and goats graze peacefully aside villages set amidst tall palms.

Xinglong's luxuriant botanical gardens illustrate the island's biodiversity or wealth of plants. In clearings penetrated by sunlight beneath tall tropical trees, there is an abundance of red flowers, gently swaying giant ferns and small palms. Waterfalls of tea-colored water crash into natural ponds surrounded by granite rocks. The calm waters of a large lake reflect the forested mountains nearby.

On the edge of the town, a park illustrates life in Indonesia, Vietnam and Thailand. Many people living in this area are overseas Chinese returning from those countries so the park displays something of their previous lifestyles. In a square, men play guitars while Indonesia women in pink blouses with sarongs of gold and orange patterns dance in formation to the accompaniment of a male singer.

Colorful pheasants eagerly display their magnificent feathers while girls in Thai costumes with long finger guards and tall peaked golden headgear sit on swings surrounded by flowers. Large Buddha statues, buildings with Thai-style gilded roofs and the ever-present scent of foliage in the humid air enhances a

feeling of being transported to southeast Asia.

Li Autonomous County: Lingshui (陵水)

Lingshui Li Ethnic Autonomous County, in the direction of Sanya, earned its fame when the local ethnic people joined forces with the PLA in the war of resistance against the Japanese. The Li and Miao people are descended from early settlers.

Several Li and Miao tourist villages sit next to the expressway, giving visitors a glimpse of local ethnic life. Women demonstrate their weaving skills outside traditional tunnel-shaped bamboo farmhouses.

Costumed Li boys and girls perform dances and acrobatic displays next to stalls selling locally-produced exotic fruits. In a raised wooden building, Li wedding ceremonies are celebrated. Fruit on red strings are placed around the bridegroom's neck. Wearing a red jacket and cap he drinks strong rice wine from a long wooden pipe.

After some singing, the bride in red is lifted onto the groom's back. When she touches the ceiling, they are married!

Hinterland: Wuzhishan and Tongza

To experience the heartland of the ethnic groups, it is necessary to go to the interior of the island: a rugged, terraced landscape of rice cultivation, rubber and coffee plantations.

There, lying in an isolated secluded basin below Wuzhishan ('Five Finger Mountain') and sitting astride a broad mountain river, is the capital of the Li and Miao Autonomous Area: the market town of Tongza (renamed 'Wuzhishan' in 2001).

The surrounding countryside is a timeless landscape of small bamboo-fenced villages, made up of brown mud-walled thatched houses sheltering beneath tall coconut palms. Beyond the fences are fishponds, vegetable gardens and banana plantations. Rice and ground nuts are spread out to dry on large concrete pavements. Chickens scurry about while outside their stys, little black and white pigs wallow in mudholes. Gleeful youngsters play around the fast-flowing irrigation channels.

Gravel roads lead out through the paddy fields, a landscape of constant human effort. The lack of mechanization gives clarity to the sounds of the countryside: the gentle "whoosh" of the farmer calling to his buffalo as it slowly pulls a wooden plough through the brown muddy waters of a field being prepared for rice planting. The dull 'klonk' from its wooden neck bell and the suction sound as each leg is extricated from the fertile earth. Girls wearing circular bamboo hats gently sing as they bend down to transplant green shoots into straight rows. Others, sitting on little wooden stools, scythe yellow mature stalks that are then bundled up and put into foot-operated wooden threshing machines.

To fully experience the wonder of nature, take the track leading up a steep-sided valley into the dense tropical forest. Below, in the gloom, a river cascades over large boulders. Bamboo grows over the path, creating tunnels that at times can only be crawled through. Bird calls high in the overhead green canopy fill the air, along with the intense noise of insects. Well-camouflaged snakes frequently lie motionless in the deep foliage littering the forest floor! The track continues to a clearing where bananas, mangoes, melons and vegetables grow. A simple bridge of bamboo poles crosses a gurgling stream to a mud-walled hut protected by wooden stockades. Outside, a woman sits preparing vegetables.

In the early evening, the natural beauty of the scene is enhanced by the watery paddy field's reflection of the sun setting behind nearby mountains. It is a time when farmers head home with wooden ploughs over their shoulders, their buffaloes lazily wandering behind.

End of the Earth: Sanya

A winding and at times dramatic road leads to Sanya. China's southernmost city occupies a narrow stretch of land parallel to the coast, so creating a natural harbor. A busy fishing port, Sanya is also the gateway to the hundreds of tiny islands scattered across the South China Sea.

Although changing rapidly, Sanya still holds many fascinating reminders of its past. Home to a sizeable Hui (Moslem) population, whose women are distinguished by brightly colored headscarves, they are supposedly descended from survivors of an Arab-trading vessel that shipwrecked there several hundred years ago.

Beyond the city at 'Tianya Haijiao' (the 'End of the Earth') and annually attracting thousands of visitors, stands the great rock pinnacles featured on the back of the Two Yuan note.

West along the coast is the recently opened Nanshan Cultural Tourism Zone. Reaching down to the sea, this forested mountainous area is a unique ecological zone. Partially-landscaped in Chinese, Japanese and European garden styles; flowering trees and waving palms rise above ponds filled with goldfish. It also contains many new and renovated Buddhist temples. Overlooking the ocean, visitors can burn large red candles while Buddhist monks in saffron robes chant, ring bells and bang drums. A statue of the goddess 'Guanyin' stands at the park entrance while another rises from a man-made island.

From Luhuitou Hill ('Deer Turning Backwards'), which rises above Sanya, the sun set over the coral Hawksbill Islands as fishing boats slowly headed back to port. Just another reminder of the many beauties of Hainan Island.